





18

FORGIVENESS
LIFE AND GLORY

MATCHETT ST. GOSPEL HALL
SUNDAY SCHOOL.



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For Good Attendance
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1942

FORGIVENESS LIFE AND GLORY

HOMELY DISCOURSES ON
ETERNAL AND WEIGHTY TRUTHS

BY
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FORGIVENESS, LIFE AND GLORY

By SIR S. ARTHUR BLACKWOOD

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PREFACE

THE following Addresses are published at the request of a friend who is in the habit of attending the weekly gathering of neighbours at my house, at which they were delivered.

Being delivered *extempore*, and, with one exception, taken down at the moment, they have doubtless many defects. But I trust that their readers—whether they be they who read the book as reminding them of what they heard at those gatherings, or those to whose notice the Addresses are presented for the first time—will pass over the defects, to dwell with solemn consideration on the eternal and weighty truths of which they treat.

My only desire in their publication is, that it may please God to accompany them with His blessing to the souls of their readers; and if but one child of God is comforted in sadness, or raised to more hearty, devoted service to Him—one anxious soul led to Him for peace and rest, or one thoughtless fellow-sinner awakened to flee unto Jesus from the wrath to come—I shall praise Him through eternity that they have not been published in vain.

Reader! may I ask you, as you turn over the following pages, to say *from your heart*:

“ O God ! bless what is Thy truth in this book to my soul, for Thy dear Son Jesus Christ’s sake ! Amen.”

STEVENSON A. BLACKWOOD.

STREATHAM.

I have taken the opportunity afforded me by the publication of a Second Edition of these Addresses to make a number of corrections which appeared necessary.

S. A. B.

STREATHAM, *March* 1865.

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FORGIVENESS, LIFE, AND GLORY

FORGIVENESS

THE SIN-OFFERING

LEVITICUS iv. 27-35

"If any one of the common people sin through ignorance : "
(ver. 27).

"Then he shall bring his offering : " (ver. 28).

"And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering
and slay the sin-offering : " (ver. 29).

"And the priest shall take of the blood : " (ver. 30).

"*And the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall
be forgiven him* " (ver. 31).

THERE is nothing concerning which God has spoken so unmistakably in His Word as the method by which a sinner may get *forgiveness of his sins*. Type upon type, incident upon incident, statement upon statement, have been multiplied again and again, so as, on the one hand, to leave no soul that is inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" without a simple answer to that question; and on the other hand, to leave without excuse any one, who either through love of sin, or through preferring his own way to God's way, ultimately finds himself standing in the light of God's judgment-seat, with all his sins upon his own head. I say the way of peace is made so clear in that

blessed book, that every one who reads it, every one who hears the simple gospel of the grace of God, must be without excuse in the day of judgment. Every mouth must be stopped then.

But if God has made it quite plain, Satan's object is, by means of his servants, to obscure this way, to make this message a dark one. And he does it in two ways : either by flatly contradicting the word of God, or by so far adulterating it with man's statements and lies, as to render it without effect in bringing the sinner to God, or giving peace to a guilty conscience. If God is in earnest on the one side, so is Satan on the other, and this may serve to teach us of what unspeakable importance it is to understand this great question of the forgiveness of sins.

Now the wonderful thing is, that the one whom this truth most concerns should really be the most unconcerned about it, and that is the guilty sinner. God is in earnest, and Satan is in earnest, and the very angels of God are deeply interested in these things ; and yet if the Spirit of God does not awaken us to see what our real state is, we are as unconcerned as the flower in the garden. We care no more by nature for knowing God's way of forgiveness than if we were stocks or stones.

It is then upon this great point I want to speak to-night ; the question which stands at the very root and foundation of all religion, all godliness, all Christianity—*the forgiveness of sins*. That is the foundation, that is the beginning. If you do not begin there, you do not begin at all. I am speaking, I suppose, to-night, as usual, to two classes—to those who have, by the grace of God, found this way of peace, and whose hopes of glory to come rest upon what God has said concerning this method of forgiveness ; and to those who, having

been awakened, are asking with more or less earnestness, "What must I do to be saved?" "Wherewith shall I come and appear before God?" It is to this latter class that I would principally address myself; and I hope this night, by God's grace, to show you from His blessed Word what a simple and glorious answer there is to such a question. There may be yet others amongst us who are not asking that question, who are just content to go on as they are, not understanding that which Jesus spake, when He said, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" If there be such here (and God only knows the hearts), let us pray that He would speak to them, and arouse them to cry out, "What must I do to be saved?"

Now there is no place in God's Word where the way of forgiveness is more clearly stated than in the verses I have just read; and I would ask those who have Bibles with them, carefully to refer with me to the words as we go through them. The Law was a "shadow of good things to come"; but it was *only* a shadow, the substance is Christ. "To Him give all the prophets witness." "The law, the psalms, the prophets," spake of Him. We therefore have two things to look at to-night. We have to look at what I have read in Leviticus, as the shadow of the good things that were to come; and then we have to look at the substance, the reality, the fulfilment of it all in the Lord Jesus.

Let us look first at the shadow. There are several points to be taken up in that. There is, first of all, the sin-offering; secondly, there is the way in which the sinner was connected with that offering; and lastly, the results that came to him through that connection.

First of all, *the offering*. It is said that "if any

man sin he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a lamb without blemish." Now, in the previous part of this chapter, and in the beginning of the next, you will find that there were several offerings he might bring—a bullock, a kid, or a pair of turtle-doves or young pigeons; from which we learn that the main characteristic of the offering consisted in its having life,¹ and it was so ordained as to suit the capability of every person; the rich man could bring his offering, the poor man his offering. *No one need be without an offering*, for God had ordered it so as to suit both the richest and the poorest.

Another great characteristic was, that it was to be "without blemish." If there was a spot, a single fault or flaw in the animal, it was of no use at all. It must be perfectly without blemish. The next thing was, that it was to be slain. "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering, and slay the sin-offering in the place of the burnt-offering." It was not merely brought to the tabernacle and then left there, its life was to be given up, its blood was to be shed; and it was to be offered in a particular place. You remark, he was to slay the sin-offering "in the place of the burnt-offering." Now, where was that? If you look at Lev. i. 3, where the law is laid down concerning the burnt-offering, you will read, "If his offering be a burnt sacrifice of the herd, let him offer a male without blemish; he shall offer it of his own voluntary will *at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation before the Lord.*" It was to be offered nowhere else. God had made such a strict regulation

¹ There was one exception to this, in Lev. v. 11, where it was ordained that in the case of one who was too poor to provide even a pair of pigeons, "an ephah of fine flour" might be presented.

about this, that if a man brought an offering and did not offer it there, he was cut off from among the people of God.

Now, it seems to me that there might be great reason why this place was particularly chosen by God. First, the door of the tabernacle of the congregation was an open, public place. Every one might see it. It stood in the midst of the camp, and at the door of it these animals had to be slain. The thing was not to be done in a corner; there was to be an open, public acknowledgment of sin.

Then again, this offering at the door of the tabernacle showed, I think, that there was no entrance into God's presence without blood. The fact of its being at the door, and the sinner being commanded to bring his offering there, was as much as to say, you cannot go into the presence of God through the door without that life being taken, and that blood being poured out.

And then I think, thirdly, we have another reason given for it in Leviticus xvii., where you find the first nine verses of the chapter taken up with the very regulation which I have described about offering at the door of the tabernacle. In the 3rd verse it is said, "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded." There could be no doubt about it. God had commanded, "What man soever there be of the house of Israel that killeth an ox, or lamb, or goat, in the camp, or that killeth it out of the camp, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer an offering *unto the Lord*, blood shall be imputed unto that man; he hath shed blood; and that man shall be cut off from among his people: to the end that the children of Israel may bring their sacrifices which they offer in the open field, even that they may bring them *unto the Lord*, unto the door of the tabernacle of the

congregation, unto the priest, and offer them for peace-offerings *unto the Lord*." And again in the 9th verse, "And bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation to offer it *unto the Lord*, even that man shall be cut off from among his people."

The great fact recognised was, that there was to be *an offering to God*. Whatever men may say in these days about sacrifice, God distinctly says, that this life, this innocent life, was to be offered *to Him*, and to Him alone; and the people were kept so completely from offering it unto others, or making any religion of their own outside the camp, that in order to ensure this principle being distinctly recognised, it was always to be brought to the place where God as good as said, "I will meet with you—this is the place where the blood is to be shed."

Then the blood, having been shed, was to be sprinkled upon the altar of the burnt-offering (ver. 30). You see the blood formed a prominent part in this ceremonial. It was not merely that the life was taken, and the animal carried away. No; God had laid the whole thing down minutely, the blood must be taken in and laid by the priest upon the altar. The blood was to be brought to God, and to no one else. And if you look at the 8th chapter, you will see what the object of the blood was. It was not always mentioned, but it was mentioned sufficiently all through the Bible to show us that its meaning and object was *to make reconciliation*, for, as was afterwards said, "Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins." If there was to be an atonement made, a reconciliation, it could only be by the blood of an innocent victim, by the life being offered up. You will see (chap. viii. ver. 15), "He poured the blood at the bottom of the altar, and sanctified it *to make reconciliation* for it." So that, if the sinner was to be

reconciled to God—if the claims of God's law upon that sinner were to be satisfied, so that God and the sinner could meet together without there being anything between them to hinder fellowship and communion, there must be shedding of blood. Now this is not an unimportant point. It is the prominent fact and truth in the Bible, that without shedding of blood there is no remission of sin (Heb. ix. 22).

But then, there was another point in this offering which we must look at, and it was this, that part of the animal was to be burnt. That too was important. "He shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace-offering, and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the Lord." Part of the animal was to be burnt, just in the way in which they burnt part of the peace-offering. This fact indicated, I believe, that the offering was *a sweet savour* unto God, for almost as often as you have that word "sweet savour" mentioned in this chapter, and other books of the Old Testament, you will find it was connected with the burning upon the altar. For instance, in Ex. xxix. 18, we read: "And thou shalt burn the whole ram upon the altar; it is a burnt-offering unto the Lord; it is *a sweet savour*; *an offering made by fire* unto the Lord"; thus showing that the burning by fire proved that the offering was acceptable to God—a sweet savour; as the flame went up, so the sweet savour went up before God, and the offering was accepted.

These were the principal points about the offering; and I beseech you, dear friends, not to think of them as merely interesting points to look at for the moment. There is a depth of meaning in them. God has written them for our instruction. It is not merely that we may say we have heard these things explained, or read about

them in books. If they have a meaning, and God has shown it, I ask you to lay hold of this meaning with your heart.

Then secondly, there comes the question, *How was the sinner connected with this offering?* You find that the sinner, having brought the offering, was to do something with it. Ver. 29: "He shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin-offering." What did that mean? Why, it meant this, that he should lay, as it were, his sin upon it; as we learn from Lev. xvi. 21, where the high priest, in laying his hands upon the head of the goat, was said to put the sins of the children of Israel upon it, and the goat consequently "bore upon him all their iniquities." The offerer as good as said, I am guilty. The law of God demands my life because He has said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." My life, therefore, is forfeited for ever. I have broken God's law. It is not a question of what I may do afterwards or feel. Here is my position. I am under the broken law of God, and my life is forfeited. Then he was to bring the innocent life for his own, and he was thus, in figure, to transfer his guilt and his sins to the head of this animal, and the animal was treated by God as if it had the sin. Now, if you look at Lev. i. 4, you will see it plainly stated that the animal was "*accepted for*" the man. Remember, dear friends, all this was in shadow and picture. Of course, "the blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sin." God could never, in reality, accept the life of an animal for a man. It needed, as we are taught in Rom. iii. 25, the blood-shedding of the Lord Jesus to enable God *righteously* to pass over the sins of believers in the past, and it was only that which could give efficacy to the shadows of the law. But this was to show us "good things to come"; and so it is said, "He shall put his hand upon

the head of the burnt-offering, and *it shall be accepted for him.*" Mark how clear and simple these words are. "It shall be accepted for him to *make atonement.*" Oh, is it not gloriously simple? One would think that a child even could see it. The one was a SUBSTITUTE for the other.

What then, lastly, was *the result*? Why, this was the result—God's claim upon the sinner was *satisfied*. His claim was the sinner's life. His law demanded it; God's holy, just law, which cannot be broken in vain, demanded the sinner's life. Life was given. God says, "It shall be accepted for him." The immediate result for the sinner was forgiveness. Why? Because the law of God had no further claim upon him. He had settled it, settled it after God's fashion, so that there could be no mistake and no doubt whatever. If you refer to chap. iv. 31, it says, "The priest shall make atonement for him, and *it shall be forgiven.*"

Now do remember this, that this was God's word, that God would have been unjust so to speak, unfaithful, if He had not forgiven him, because He had laid down the whole way. He had made it so clear that no one could make a mistake, and therefore, when the sinner had complied with God's command, and brought the innocent victim in his place, and confessed his sin, and acknowledged his guilty ruined state, and offered up his guilty life, it was all according to what God had said, and it would have been unfaithful and contrary to His own blessed word and promise if He had refused *then and there* forgiveness to the sinner. And therefore He did not refuse it; and the word was, "It shall be forgiven him."

But there was more than mere forgiveness here, and I want you to pay special attention to that. There was the *knowledge* of forgiveness. The man need not, and

did not remain in doubt as to whether he was forgiven, because God's Holy Word, which he heard read every Sabbath day, left him no shadow of an excuse for doubting that he was a pardoned sinner. God had assured him of it in the most solemn terms that He could possibly use. He had told him that when His law was complied with, and His demands satisfied, the sinner should be forgiven, and therefore the man was perfectly warranted in going away contented with God's assurance of the fact. This is particularly important, and especially so now, because men are denying this truth. They are denying that a sinner can know that he is forgiven, and they regard it as preposterous and presumptuous to say, "*I know I am forgiven.*" Now just suppose this man had come up and offered his offering according to God's word. Suppose the priest had sprinkled the blood upon the altar and that these words had been pronounced, or at all events remembered, "*It shall be forgiven him.*" Suppose he went away and met his neighbour, while feeling in his heart, and manifesting on his face, the joy of knowing that his sins were pardoned; and suppose his neighbour said to him, "*You have no right to say that, how do you know it is true? What a presumptuous man you are to say you are forgiven! What right have you to say that you are forgiven?*" What answer do you think the man would make? Why, he would say, "*God has said so; don't call me in question. It is His word, not mine. I do not say it of myself; if I did, it would be presumption; but the Word of God says so.*" And thus he would triumphantly answer the objection of any man.

Supposing a man said, "*You have been such an awful sinner.*" He would reply, "*True, but the sin has been laid on the head of another, and God has*

accepted His death instead of mine." And so the man would go home happy. This, dear friends, is just the shadow; it is not the substance, because it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin; but so far, no doubt, as an Israelite in those days saw by faith the one offering of which all this is the type, and recognised his state as a guilty sinner, so far we may be sure God did pardon him, not for the sake of the blood of the lamb or goat, but for the sake of Him of whom you and I have been singing this evening.

And now let us look at the substance, and see how far this applies to the sinner now, because that is the point.

First, the sin-offering. It must be without blemish. Is there a sin-offering without blemish? Yes, thank God, the Word of God tells us there is a sin-offering without blemish. God has Himself provided a Lamb for an offering. You and I cannot do this. No man can give to God a ransom for his soul, much less for his brother's; but God has provided one which is a sufficient, full, and perfect satisfaction for sin; and that is the Lamb of God "without blemish and without spot." Is there any doubt? One hardly need touch upon the question except to show how the shadow is thoroughly brought out in the substance. There are abundant witnesses to the fact that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God without blemish or spot. He could say Himself to those around Him, "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" He is the only man who ever could. And not only did He ask the question, but none could answer Him. His enemies could not. His very judge said, "I find no fault with this man." The very captain of the soldiers that led Him to the execution said, "Truly this was a righteous man." There was the Lamb of God, then, proved by His own mouth, by His life, by

the witnessing of judge and jury, so to speak, an innocent man, yet pouring out His soul unto death because He was the Lamb of God ; because " it pleased the Lord to bruise Him " and to " put Him to grief." " The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all ; and by His stripes we are healed." Christ, then, is He of whom the Scriptures speak—the Lamb of God without blemish and spot.

But He must be slain. His life, blameless and spotless, was of no use without His death, because it was the *blood*, God said, that makes *atonement* for the soul. Observe, God's claim upon the sinner is not a holy life (till after he is born again), but his death. That is what God's law asks from you and me ; for we are by nature condemned, having broken His law. Jesus comes, living a holy, blameless life, that He may offer Himself, as we read, " without spot to God " ; and then that life is offered up to make atonement and reconciliation for the sins of the people.

And then we see further how important these great truths are by referring to the place where this offering was to be offered—at the door of the tabernacle. These things, as Paul said to Festus, " were not done in a corner." In one of the greatest cities of the world, surrounded by all the nations of the world, the Lamb of God was publicly, openly offered up on the Cross, outside Jerusalem.

Then, again, it was at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, to show that there was no access to God but by His blood. The door of God's tabernacle, dear friends—where is it ? It is on earth. Do not think it is anywhere else. The gate of heaven is down here. The narrow way is here. The door of the tabernacle is here, and if a man does not enter here, he never enters hereafter, for there is no door there. The

door is shut there for ever. Only by the blood-shedding of Jesus do we have access. He is the new and living way. If you want to get to God—if you want to know your sin is pardoned—if you want to feel the love of God shed abroad in your heart—come to Jesus Christ, for no man cometh unto the Father but by Him. Men think otherwise, and they may say as they do now, that every man's way is good ; and that we shall all meet at the end. God's Word tells a very different tale, and by that we shall be judged. "There is *none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved,*" but the name of Jesus.

And, again, it was the door of the tabernacle of the congregation because it was an offering unto God. "He offered Himself without spot to God" (Heb. ix. 14). Whatever men may write, and think, and speak, in these days, about the law of God not being propitiated by blood—the Word of God is explicit. "He offered Himself to God" ; He was "a propitiation for sins." God provided and gave that propitiation. It was not that He must be appeased as if He were a God whose nature needed appeasing, and that He could not love us till He was propitiated, but His law must be satisfied. God Himself, in His love, has provided a Lamb, and He has done so, because He "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son" to make reconciliation—"propitiating," as we read in Rom. iii. 25, "through faith in His blood." The blood must be shed. The life must be offered up.

But there was another point, in both the substance and the shadow, which I think is deeply important. There must be part *burnt*. It was not enough that the blood should be shed ; we must know that the sacrifice has been accepted. It was to be offered unto God. Now, so to speak, Jesus Christ not only had His blood

shed at the hands of man, but the fire of God consumed Him as a sin-offering. We very much underrate the meaning of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus upon the Cross if we only think of Him as dying at the hands of wicked men. He did not only give Himself into their hands to have His hands and His feet nailed to the Cross, and His head crowned with thorns. There was the suffering at the hands of God. "It pleased *the* LORD to bruise Him; *He* hath put Him to grief." It is written, "Our God is a consuming fire"; and when the claim of God's holiness, and justice, and truth, met here upon the Cross of Jesus, with One who was bearing in His own body the sin of the world, and who was thus "*made sin for us*," then and there that fire licked up the sacrifice; and you see the acceptance of it just as the sinner of old saw the acceptance of his offering in the ascending flame. You see it in the resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. We see that God has accepted the sacrifice, and that the whole thing is done. We never could have known that if Jesus had not been raised. If He had not ascended to heaven there would have been no proof that God was satisfied with the price paid. If Christ had only gone into the prison-house—if He had only lain low in the grave and never risen—how should you and I know that the debt was paid and God was satisfied? But the prison doors were opened, and having paid "the utmost farthing," the Surety comes out, living, to die no more. "The Spirit shall convince the world of righteousness, *because I go to the Father*." There was the Righteous One, having satisfied every claim, going up to His Father, and sitting down for ever at the right hand of God. Oh! lay hold upon this, because on your apprehension of the acceptance of the sacrifice that He has provided, depends your peace. I do not deny that a sinner may

be resting on Jesus as his substitute, and yet not know how perfectly his sacrifice is accepted ; but I say that for present peace, holiness, and power of usefulness, he must see this clearly, that God has accepted the offering which He Himself has provided, and that because He has respect unto the offering, He has respect to the offerer ; just as He had to Abel and his offering. Cain brought his own offering, which was not God's ; Abel brought the offering which God approved of ; and, therefore, it is written, " God had respect unto Abel and his offering." The difference between the two was in the character of their offerings. In Eph. v. 2, we read, " Christ hath loved us, and hath given *Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.*" GOD'S testimony to the sufficiency and acceptability of the sacrifice of Jesus was His raising Him up from the dead, and setting Him at " the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens," and thus the sinner sees that God is satisfied.

Now, secondly, *how is the sinner connected with the sin-offering?* Of old it was thus : he laid his hand upon the sin-offering. Now you and I cannot do that with the hands of our body, for Jesus the Son of God, in His body, is at the right hand of God. But the Word of God has explained what this means. The Old Testament says, He that *lays his hand upon the sin-offering* shall be forgiven. The New Testament says, *He that believeth in Jesus* shall be forgiven ; so that it is not, as I have often said, laying the hands of the body but the hands of the soul upon Him who is the sinner's sin-offering.

" *My faith doth lay her hand
On that dear head of Thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.*"

It is just, dear friends, taking the place of the poor, guilty, condemned, ruined sinner—saying as the man of old did—I deserve death, but here is an offering which God has provided :

“ I lay my sins on Jesus,
The spotless Lamb of God.”

I cannot make atonement if I live to all eternity, but Jesus can. He HAS made reconciliation, and on that atonement, that reconciliation, I rest my soul ! Believing in Jesus is resting on Him, trusting alone and simply to the sacrifice which He has offered, being satisfied with that finished work which has satisfied God, being well pleased with Him in whom God is well pleased.

This, nothing more and nothing less, is believing in Jesus, and to such faith God annexes the forgiveness of sins ; not that the faith *saves* any more than the laying the hand on the sacrifice *saved*, but it appropriates the pardon that is given freely because of the accepted substitute.

Upon this the word of God is explicit.

“ *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.*” “ To Him give all the prophets witness, that whosoever *believeth in Him* shall receive *the remission of sins.*” “ Through this man is preached unto you *the forgiveness of sins*, and by Him all that *believe are justified from all things.*” The sinner is identified with the sacrifice, and the word is the same now to-night as it was through those hundreds of years when these things were foretold in type and figure—“ *it shall be forgiven him.*”

This is the glorious result : the sinner gets his pardon at the hands of a satisfied God ; he receives *the forgiveness of sins*. Do you see it, dear friends ? Do you lay

hold of this truth? Oh, may God give us to see it in its fulness: to take our place as guilty sinners, and to trust in the crucified and risen Lord, whom God has accepted in the place of the sinner.

And now to close: have you got this forgiveness from God? If not, why not? You say, I do not *feel* these things as I ought. Now God said nothing about *feeling*. It is you who say that, or the devil who prompts you to say, I do not feel as I ought—I have not got this happy feeling, or the earnestness which I see others have—that intense pleasure in the things of God. But God has told you what He demands, and that is not a certain amount of *feeling*, but a *sacrifice*, and as you cannot provide it, God has provided it in the person of His own Son; and lest you should be in any doubt as to whether your sacrifice is the right one, God has laid it all so minutely down that you need not have a doubt. “For He hath showed thee, O man, what is good.” He hath written it down. You need not have a shadow of a doubt. When you come before God, presenting to Him by faith the sacrifice of Jesus, saying, “Look not, O God, on me a guilty sinner, but on my Saviour, on my sacrifice,” there is no shadow of a doubt that He does forgive you, because, dear friend, God would be unfaithful if He did not. “God is not a man that He should lie.” “He is *faithful and just to forgive us our sins*.” When you come pleading that blood, God *cannot* send you away. He *cannot* deny Himself. If you come to Him to-night as you are, with any mass of worldliness and sin upon you that you like to bring, God receives you, and you are pardoned. It is not my word, it is God’s. “To Him give all the prophets witness, that *WHOSOEVER believeth on Him shall receive the remission of sins*.” You have not got to provide anything. You have not got to ask

questions about this, that, or the other, if you are asking that one question, "What must I do to be saved?" "Come," He says, "for all things are now ready." You may know that you are forgiven, because God has said so.

Bear with me for a moment, while I repeat that you may know that you are forgiven—not by any of your feelings, not by any pleasant sensations or emotions in your heart—pleasant enough if God grant them, and much to be desired, but not as a witness of the forgiveness of sins—but by the word of God;—the only witness—the only warrant that a sinner has in this world for knowing he is pardoned the moment that he trusts in Jesus is this—*God has said so*. Rest your soul on the Word of God, and He will not disown you. God will not dishonour His word, any more than a man of name or position would break his word, or dishonour his name written at the bottom of a document. God has spoken and He cannot lie. O dear friends, then rest your soul upon that. There is a day coming—it may be in your time, when the foundations of the world will be upset—when the faith of the very elect will be tried, and if your faith rests upon what you feel, or hope, or anything else but the written word of God, your faith will go down. If you rest your poor, guilty soul upon what He has said concerning the forgiveness of sin, He has pledged His word—you "shall never perish"—you "shall have everlasting life."

I know that many will tell you that it is presumptuous to say you *know* that you are forgiven; but they know not of what they speak; presumption lies not in believing, but in doubting what God has said; and as He has said distinctly over and over again that the sinner that believes in Jesus *has* the forgiveness of his sins, it is not presumption, but *faith*, to take Him at

His word. When He has said, as in 1 John v. 13, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, THAT YE MAY KNOW that ye have eternal life," it becomes flagrant presumption, and is only making God a liar, as in verse 10, to say either that the believer has not eternal life, or that he cannot know it. He *may* know it, he *ought* to know it: and if he does not know it, he is dishonouring God and defrauding himself of that joy and peace which is his birthright through faith in Jesus.

Now, are there any who are neglecting this way of salvation? The devil will suggest thousands of excuses, such as, I cannot come of myself, I cannot believe of myself, etc. God knows it all. He knows your inability, and therefore He has left you nothing to do. There is no excuse. You may make thousands, but you cannot make one that will avail. When the king came into the marriage feast, and found there the man who had no right to be there, and asked the question, "How camest thou hither not having on a wedding garment?" there was not an excuse then; *he was speechless*. And so, men whose mouths are full of excuses now why they should not be saved and turned from their sins, will have nothing to say in arrest of judgment, when God asks that question, "How camest thou in hither without a wedding garment?" Are you trusting, as many are, in what they call the love of God, or in a vague hope of mercy? Dear friends, the love of God *is* infinite, or you and I would not be here. It passeth knowledge, for He gave His only-begotten Son; and His compassion is so great that you and I can have no idea of it—no, not the millionth part of it. But I tell you this—God loves His Son more; and He will never see the soul that tramples under foot the blood of the Son of God, and counts that a trifling thing—He

will never see that soul in heaven. Much as the living God loves you and me, His Son is unspeakably more precious ; and he that rejecteth Christ, the only way of salvation, will never see the face of God, except to be cast out for ever. And therefore, I beseech you, as you value your own soul and your eternal welfare, “ see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh.” It is not I who speak, it is this book—God’s written Word ; and there we find chapter after chapter, and page after page of this one glorious truth, that there is forgiveness for the very worst of sinners, NOW, by trusting in the blood of Christ ; but that way rejected, “ there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.” What is your state now ? This meeting and this world—at any rate all that portion of it who hear the gospel of Christ—is just divided into two classes, those *who have accepted Christ*, and those who, from thousands of reasons, *have rejected or are rejecting Him*. In one of these classes you are found. It is not a question of the amount of your sins ; it is not a question of the state of your feelings ; it is not any other question than this—have you received Christ ? Is your soul resting on Him ?

May God give us grace to see where we stand this night as before Him ; and if any of you are conscious that you are not really resting, wholly and entirely, on the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot—if you are conscious of that, it is not too late now. Come and believe in Him now, for the word of God by the mouth of Jesus says, “ *Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.*”

LIFE

LIVING WATERS OFFERED

JOHN vii. 37-39

“ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive ; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given : because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) ”

THERE was a peculiar fitness in the day and the saying here recorded. It was a remarkable day. It was “ the last day, that great day of the feast.” It was the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted seven or eight days ; and by a reference to the 23rd chapter of Leviticus, you will see what its object and meaning was. In the 34th verse it is written, “ Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the Lord.” Verse 39 : “ When ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days : on the first day shall be a Sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a Sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook ; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall

keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations : ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days ; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths : that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt."

The greater part of the 29th chapter of Numbers is taken up with a description of what was to be done in those seven days : from the 12th verse to the end of the chapter. And in the 16th chapter of Deuteronomy (vers. 13-15), the great feature of the feast that was brought out, was that it was to be a time of great rejoicing.

It seems, then, that the Feast of Tabernacles was specially instituted as an acknowledgment of God's great mercy. Every one that took to them boughs and made themselves a booth in the field, leaving their homes in the city, did it in remembrance that God made them to dwell in booths when they were redeemed out of the land of Egypt. It was *a remembrance of redemption*. It was like the Passover, in that it went back to redemption, because it commemorated the coming out of Egypt. It was *the remembrance of the journey* in the wilderness, and it was *an acknowledgment* that they were come unto the land which the Lord their God gave unto them, and no doubt every godly Israelite could understand this.

There was an additional circumstance that took place in this feast. It is not written in the Bible, but it is related in all the histories of the Jews. A procession was formed of the priests, who went from the temple to the pool of Siloam and brought water from thence in a golden vessel ; returning to the temple, this water was poured out amidst great rejoicing upon

the sacrifice that lay upon the altar. That was done for seven days, and it was a time of so great rejoicing, that they used to say, "Whoever has not seen the rejoicing of the drawing of water never saw rejoicing in his life."

It was the end of the religious year, and considered to be the happiest time of all. But the Jews had allowed it gradually to fall into disuse. There are only two references made to its being kept with anything like its original solemnity: One in the 2nd book of Chronicles, ch. vii.; the dedication of Solomon's temple. It is not mentioned there as the Feast of the Tabernacles, but it clearly was that, as appears from the time at which it was kept; for if you refer to the 5th chapter of the 2nd book you will see that all the men of Israel assembled themselves to the king in the feast that was in the *seventh month*; and then in the 7th chapter and 8th verse we read, "At the same time, Solomon kept the feast seven days, and all Israel with him." Ver. 9: "And in the eighth day they made a solemn assembly, for they kept the dedication of the altar seven days, and the feast seven days, and on the three-and-twentieth day of the seventh month he sent the people away into their tents, glad and merry in heart for the goodness that the Lord had showed unto David, and to Solomon, and to Israel His people."

It would not seem from this that they went to dwell in booths; but in the other instance, which is related in the 8th chapter of Nehemiah (ver. 14), we read, "And they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the end of the seventh month." The following verses describe their actual proceedings, and then it is added, "and there was very great gladness."

Now it was on the last day of this feast, the close of the whole religious year of the Jews, that Jesus stood and cried these words. It is very interesting here to watch the Lord's conduct. You read in the 2nd verse, "Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand; His brethren, therefore, said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works which Thou doest." For they did not believe on Him. Then said Jesus (ver. 6) unto them, "My time is not yet come: but yours is always ready. Go ye up into this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for My time is not yet full come."

He did not go up at the beginning. He did not go up to take part in all this rejoicing and joy. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." But you find afterwards, in the 10th verse, "When His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast, not openly"—not to show Himself unto the world—"but as it were in secret."

About the midst of the feast (ver. 14), Jesus went into the temple and taught, and there was great musing in men's hearts about it. Some said, "He is a good man." "Nay," but said others, "He deceiveth the people." Some said, "Is not this the Prophet that should come into the world? Is not this the Christ?" All men mused in their hearts about Him as they had about John.

And now all the religious services had come to an end. The religious year was finished. The water had been poured out with joy and rejoicing seven days. All the sacrifices were offered. The people were beginning to go home. But He who was standing in the midst of them, doubtless could see in all this outward show many an aching heart, many a disappointed spirit. He could see that many were

not at peace. And so He forestalls, as it were, that great day when these words should be properly fulfilled after He was risen and ascended, and "on the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, *If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.*"

They had not got satisfaction or joy. They had not got abiding peace; but there stood One who could give it.

Now here it is remarkable to see that Jesus was speaking to *religious* people. The city was full, we may say, of nothing else but religious people who came up from all the cities of Judæa, as His brethren had, and as He had, to keep the Feast of the Tabernacles. He was not speaking to the decidedly ungodly, the openly worldly, or profane, but He offers to these religious people the very same thing to satisfy them that He did to persons without any religion at all. You remember the story in the 4th chapter of John, where He meets the woman of Samaria, a person living in open sin, and without any profession of religion, and He announces to her the gift of God, the living water. He gives her to drink, and she goes away satisfied. But now He stands with quite a different congregation around Him. It is not the worldly, so to speak: at any rate, not the pleasure-seeking; but religious people—people who had gone through a round of "divine services," but who yet had not got "the peace of God."

And so He stands there and announces to them the very same blessed truths that a short time before He had announced to the careless and ungodly woman of Samaria.

Now, dear friends, Jesus is ever the same. There are multitudes of people in this world who are like the Jews. You have gone through, it may be, a round

of religious services, but you have not got *peace*. - You have had a desire awakened after the knowledge of God, and have been going on and on and on, and, as it were, your year of religious services has come to an end. I mean in this way: you cannot get further. You have done what you could. There is nothing more to be done. You have gone through the round of religious duties, but you have not drunk of the living waters. To such Jesus says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." He shows you where your mistake lies. You may have been working and striving, but it has all been the "works of the law," and not the "hearing of faith." It has been the *doing the best you could*, but it has *not* been the *coming to Jesus and trusting in Him*. To such He says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink."

But there is a deeper truth than that here. It seems as if He recognised that there was in every one a deep-seated emptiness of heart—a dissatisfaction with earthly things. And is not that the truth? Do not you and I, dear hearers, know it? Don't we know that there is in our hearts, till the grace of God satisfies them, an emptiness, a weariness; that though there may be excitement and pleasure, yet when those solemn, silent, death-like moments come; when some sudden blow tears away the veil, as it were, that hides the unseen things from the things that we see, that then there is felt to be a want, an emptiness. You then feel, "What I have got does not satisfy my soul. I want something more." All of us who have come to Christ know what that is; and I should think there is not one here who has lived a few years—even the children among us—who has not found that the pleasures of this world never satisfy the heart. There are such moments in every one's life, thank God, a kind of solemn

warning, when men hold their breath for a little time ; when they stop, and in their search after something, stretch out their hands ; and it may be, they hear then that still, small voice—the still, small voice of One who says, “ If any man thirst, let him come unto *Me* and drink.” “ Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and *I will give you rest.*” “ *I will refresh you.*” But that is often disregarded, and something else is snatched up ; the nearest book, the nearest pleasure, the most convenient thing to engage the mind. And so that voice dies away, and perhaps the last solemn warning has ceased. Oh, may He give us an ear to hear, and a heart to receive these blessed words—to receive this living water, of which, if a man drink, he shall thirst *no more for ever.*

There are two or three special points that we may notice here. There is, *first of all, what Jesus offers ;* “ If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive ; because the Holy Ghost was not yet given, for Jesus was not yet glorified.” God has left us in no doubt of what the living water which Christ speaks of represents. “ This spake He of *the Spirit.*”

Now the Spirit is life, eternal life, that life which God is offering to all through Jesus—life which God pours into that man’s heart who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. But we are told here, that He spake it “ of the Spirit, which they who believe on Him should receive, because the Holy Ghost was not yet given ” (not in His fulness, as the Comforter, as the One who dwells in the hearts and in the bodies of His people). And the last words of the text show us what a wonderful blessing, what an unspeakable precious gift of God, the Holy Spirit is ; because you see what His bestowal

must depend upon—the glorification of Jesus Christ. It involves the completion of the work of the Lord Jesus, for without that no sinner could receive the Holy Ghost. The Father gave Him, it is true, “power over all flesh, that He might give *eternal life* to as many as the Father had given Him.” But there was a great obstacle in the way of their receiving eternal life, and it was this: that men are sinners, and that God’s holy law had first of all a claim on them. Gracious as the purposes of God were, His justice was inflexible, and men must be set free from the condemnation of the law before they could receive the Holy Ghost. And thus we find in the 3rd chapter of Galatians (ver. 13), that after it is said that every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them, is accursed of God, it is added, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on the tree.” Why was He made a curse, then? “That the blessing of Abraham (*i.e.*, the blessing promised to Abraham) might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” (ver. 14). What was the blessing of Abraham? The same verse explains “that we might receive *the promise of the Spirit* through faith.” Thus we see the reason of the evangelist’s expression, “The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” The law was in the way. Jesus Christ comes, made under the law, is hung upon the tree, makes His soul an offering for sin under the great sentence of that law, and then, as we read in the 4th chapter of Ephesians, “He ascended up on high; He led captivity captive, and *received gifts* for men.”

And you will find, if you look in the 2nd chapter of Acts, that the bestowal of that gift was the first result of the glorification of Jesus (ver. 33). “Therefore,

being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, *He hath shed forth this*, which ye now both see and hear." This was the gift of the Holy Ghost. So that when Jesus says here, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink the living water," He speaks it of the Spirit, the life of God, which can only come forth from Him, and flow into and dwell in our hearts, when the whole work is finished which Jesus came to do. He says, "I have glorified Thee on the earth; I *have* finished the work." Then the Father raises Him up from the dead, sets Him at His own right hand; and then is poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. You may then see what a blessing this is, what a glorious gift, if it needed all this, the suffering, the humiliation, the agony, the curse, the death, the burial, the resurrection, the ascension, of Jesus to the right hand of God. Do not let us, dear friends, ever under-value this. It is life eternal. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His," for he has got no life. Those who receive the gift and indwelling of the Holy Ghost have eternal life, life to which death is no obstacle or hindrance, because we read in the 8th chapter of Romans, "If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you." So that the death of this mortal body is no obstacle to eternal life. Thus Jesus offers eternal life, and with it wondrous joy, for there is "joy in the Holy Ghost." There is a deep-seated joy which the sinner experiences who begins this life to God. It is written, "I shall be *satisfied when I awake* with Thy likeness." But though full satisfaction will be only at that resurrection morning, yet the children

of God taste these rivers here, and can say with truth :

“O Christ, He is the fountain, the deep sweet well of love,
The streams on earth I've tasted ; more deep I'll drink above ;
 There to an ocean fulness His mercy doth expand,
 Where glory, glory dwelleth, in Emmanuel's land.”

Yes, there is a fulness we taste *here*. “Oh, how excellent,” says the Psalmist, “is Thy loving-kindness, O God. Thou shalt make them *to drink of the rivers of Thy pleasures*, for with *Thee* is the fountain of life.” And again, “*With joy* shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation” (Isa. xii. 3).

Then let us lay hold of this one great truth, that Christ here offers life, His own life, the Spirit, to give which He must die, for before the waters could flow out the rock must be smitten. And He has not changed. “If any man thirst,” He still says, “let him come unto Me and drink.” He offers, in few words, that which the whole Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, testifies of, *the unsearchable riches of Christ* ; and He still says to you, as He said to that poor woman at Jacob's well, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water. This spake He of the Spirit.”

Now, secondly, dear friends, it is infinitely important for us to know, not only what He offers, but to *whom He offers it*. “IF ANY MAN.” That is the word, thank God. He does not limit the offer, and do not you limit it for a second. If it is not for *any* man, it is not for you and me. Some men would limit it. They would say, You must not preach so full a gospel ; Christ only died for the elect ; you must not go and tell men that *any* man can have it. Now, dear friends,

you and I have no right to limit the gospel of the Grace of God, unless we have gone up to heaven, and turned over the very last page of God's book of life. And when we have done that, we may say, I will offer the gospel, the gift of the Spirit through Christ, to this man, and not to that. If there was any one who could have limited it, it was the Preacher here; He who stood and said, "If *any man* thirst." If you look at the 6th chapter, you will see there (ver. 64) that Jesus knew what you and I never can know; for "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him." And yet He says, "If *any man* thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." He does not limit the offer any more than Isaiah, when he says, "Ho, *every one* that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; buy wine and milk without money, and without price"; any more than He limits it when He says, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved, *all ye ends of the earth*." And we might go on multiplying passage after passage, such as, "*Whosoever* will, let him take the water of life freely." "I am the door, by Me if *any man* enter in he shall be saved."

No, dear friends, do let us take care of this. One knows how subtle the devil is, and how he seeks to make us hold one error if not another. Therefore we have to sit at the feet of Jesus, and learn of Him. Though the doctrine of the election of God is a glorious truth, and one that I do not suppose any one here would hold more firmly than myself, yet I see on the other hand, that Christ, who knew all things, did not limit His offers of eternal life and glory. It is much better to have the theology of the Bible than all our own schemes of doctrine. What a remarkable example to us is St. Paul, who, whilst in the 9th chapter of Romans he had been speaking in such terms about

the election of God, and His having chosen only a remnant out of Israel to be saved, as we never would use, if it were not for God's word, yet in the 10th chapter says, "My heart's desire and prayer for *Israel* is, that they might be saved." It does not limit his prayers. The knowledge that God has distinct purposes of grace to *some*, does not limit a Christian's prayers for all, any more than the knowledge that Christ had a people given to Him by the Father from the foundation of the world, hindered Him from saying, "If *any man* thirst." And so let us glory in this, that we too can say to all around us, as our Master said, "If *any man* thirst"; and point them to Jesus Christ. It is, "*any man*." It is, "*whosoever* believeth."

Ah, but you may say, there is *limit* here, for souls are very subtle sometimes in trying to find some flaw in the proclamation which shall exclude them. And so they say, "If *any man* *thirst*," you see, he must be a *thirsty* soul. There is no doubt of that. "Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." But are we the judges of another's thirst? Can you look into my heart, or I into yours, and say, You do not thirst after the grace of God? I cannot, and I do not know who can. So we must deliver the message that He gives us. "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to *every creature*." Who knows where the thirst begins, and how small a degree of thirst warrants a sinner in taking at the hand of Christ the gift of the Holy Ghost? You and I cannot, and perhaps the one whom we should think the least thirsty, is the one who thirsts the most: and the one that makes the largest professions of desire after God is the one perhaps who has no real thirst. You can imagine that there are some so thirsty, so parched, so aching, that they can make no show of it. They

cannot express it to their fellow-creatures, and when they try to pray their lips are clammy and joined together. Think of a man lying down by the roadside on a hot day. He has walked a long way, and his lips are parched. He has fainted for want of water. He is half dead. He cannot speak. Is he not thirsty? And should you be warranted in saying, I must not give water to that man; he does not thirst enough? The greater the spiritual death the more need of Christ, and of the Holy Ghost to quicken you. If any one thirst here, if there is any one in want of a Saviour to-night, thank God these words are for you: "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." Do not exclude yourself. The Word of God does not exclude you. Do not listen to what men say who would persuade you that you have not gone through the necessary experience to fit you for believing on Jesus.

"All the fitness He requireth,
Is to feel your need of Him."

Can you say, I do? He does not say, you must feel it so and so much. He does not say, you must have a heart broken with a sense of sin, till you weep upon your knees; till you are ready to go through anything. He does not say that that would exclude a great many. No, dear friends, do not go beyond Scripture; do not come short of it. "If any man," that means, if you, while you read this. Is there a want in your heart, the very least feeble sensation after the living God—after eternal life—after the forgiveness of sins—after something that shall satisfy, when all the things you see and feel have passed away? then *you are a thirsty soul, and you are warranted, on this blessed invitation of the Lord Jesus, to come unto Him and take the water of life.*

But lastly, it is important to know what *the terms* are on which He offers this. Men make many terms. They will prescribe such a wonderful list of things, sacraments, church-going, chapel and school attending, confirmation, Bible-reading, prayers ; a long, long list, and a very weary list. One never knows when one has got to the end of it. What are the terms on which Jesus Christ offers the gift of the Holy Ghost to your heart ? Dear hearers, if there is anything important in the world, it is to know that. Do *you* know it ? Do *you* know the terms of the gospel ? What are the conditions of Christ's gospel ? Many, you know, make it quite as hard a thing as the law of old. You must just do as many things in one way now, as they had to do in another way then. Your *faith* is your work. You must believe with a certain strong faith. Your *repentance* becomes a work. You must do this, and that, and the other. If the gospel of the grace of God is announced to us in such terms as that, then I say we are of all men the most miserable. We have no chance of ever fulfilling these conditions, or ever doing this work, because by Nature we are dead. The law comes to men on the supposition that they can do something. The gospel comes to them on the ground that they can do *nothing*. This verse tells us the terms, the condition on which the gift of the Holy Ghost is this night offered to you, if you have not received Him. What are those terms, then ? *Coming and taking*. Nothing else. *Coming and receiving*, not *doing* anything. Very often this very coming is made out to be a work. Many often think : Oh, I have not come as I ought. I have not come in the right spirit. I feel I do not come as others do. They, in fact, make their coming to be a very great thing. Now, suppose for an instant that I were a very rich man, and were

to say to all the people in the village, "Here is a five-pound note for every one that comes to me, and takes it out of my hand." We will suppose that a man came and took it, and that he went home and showed it to his friends, and they said, "Well, how did you get it?—did you have *to do* anything for it?" He would say, "No, I had to do nothing." He would not call his coming to me doing anything. He would not call the stretching out of his hand to take the five-pound note *doing* anything. He would not be such a fool. Ah, the devil makes men fools, though. He "blinds the minds of them that believe not," and he tries to make us suppose that this coming and receiving is something so hard, that we must be worked up to a particular state of mind to do it.

The terms, dear friends, are *receiving* what God offers through Jesus Christ. The word "coming" is explained in the 38th verse. The word "drink" is explained in the 39th verse, if we want an explanation of it. "If any man thirst, let him *come* unto Me," and in the next verse we are told, "He that *believeth* in Me"; so that "coming" and "believing" are the same. If we are asking to-night that most blessed of all inquiries, "What must I do to be saved?" Jesus says, "Come," and the Scripture explains that to mean "believe," "trust in Him." If you are saying, "How shall I *drink*?" "This spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe in Him should *receive*." So, then, "receiving" is "drinking." Oh, may God open your eyes to see this glorious truth, and satisfy your heart.

Jesus Christ doubtless sees the weariness and longing of your aching heart; though you may be worldly, thoroughly worldly people. Well, it is for you. You thirst; you want to get your soul satisfied. Come to Jesus.

Some who are religious have come here. You have gone the whole round, and your religious year, as it were, is finished, and you have not got peace. On the "last day," when all your efforts have failed, when everything you have done has come to an end, and proved fruitless, Jesus says, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink the living waters." What an awful thing it is to refuse this gift! It would be a foolish thing for a thirsty man to pass by the fountain in the village and not drink, if a draught from that fountain would revive him. Oh dear friends, the time is passing away, the day of grace, in which we can hear the acceptable words of Christ's gospel. Opportunity after opportunity passes away, and some of you are still without the living waters. "*How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*" It is not, How shall we escape if we don't drink as we ought, but if we turn aside, if we push away the outstretched hand of Jesus, if we disregard the fountain of living waters which flows forth from Him, how shall we escape? For "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." Let me ask you to-night to look unto Him, to trust in Him, to take Him at His word, and He will give you the living waters; His blood shall wash away all your sins, so that they shall be remembered no more for ever, and you shall receive the Holy Ghost.

Just one word to those who believe in Jesus. You have tasted that the Lord is gracious; you have drunk the living water, you have received the Holy Ghost. But are you to be content with one draught? What does He say? "Be ye *filled* with the Spirit." Are we filled? Do you think we are? If we were, would not our lives be different? Does Christ wish us to be stinted in this supply? What does He say? "Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink *abundantly*, O beloved."

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it *more abundantly*." We are not straitened in Him, we are straitened in ourselves. Why is there among those who believe in Jesus so much thirsting after the things of this world? It is because we are not "*filled with the Spirit*." Mark that expression in Eph. v. 18, "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." If you want satisfaction, it is not to be got by the drinking at an earthly cup, which is soon emptied, but by receiving the Spirit, by drinking the living water, day by day, hour by hour, and moment by moment.

Yes, dear friends, if there is one thing we want, when we sum it all up, it is this, to be *filled with the Spirit*. Then should we be mighty men and women in Christ. We should be above the world. Being "satisfied with the river of God's pleasures," we should care no longer for "the pleasures of sin," which are but "for a season." Therefore to believers, as well as to the unsaved, Jesus still says, "*If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink*."

Oh, may God help us all to answer that invitation, and say, "Lord, I come. I have not used the precious gift Thou hast given me, up to this time, as I might have used it; but Thou art gracious, willing to pass it by, and to fill me with that Spirit whom I have yet so often grieved."

"Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve,
Because Thy promise I believe—
O Lamb of God, I come!"

LIVING WATERS RECEIVED

JOHN vii. 37-39

“ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) ”

THE last time we met, you will remember that I spoke to you from the 7th chapter of St. John's Gospel, and the 37th and following verses.

I want to go on with the subject to-night ; but before I do so, let me, my dear friends, ask all who were here, What effect did that invitation have upon you ? It was God's truth, so far as I knew it, and its truth did not depend upon the excellency of the manner in which the speaker put it. I do not, therefore, mean to ask you what effect my words had upon you, but what effect did the invitation of Jesus Christ—what effect did the words of the living God, which I spoke to you, have upon you ? Can you say :

“ I heard the voice of Jesus say,—
Behold, I freely give
The living water ; thirsty one,
Stoop down, and drink, and live ” ?

And then can you say :

*“ I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream ;*

My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And *now* I live in Him " ?

What was the result of the invitation which was declared in your ears that night ? What did you do with it ? Did you accept it ? Did you come to Jesus ? What have you been doing with that offer since first you heard ? One minute, one second, would have sufficed for you to accept it ; have you accepted it ? Or has another fortnight passed over any of your heads with such glorious words as those sounding in your ears, and not accepted ?

I think it is very possible that there are some listening to me to-night who did hear those words, and said, " Ah, it is all very nice and true " ; and yet a fortnight has gone away, and you have never drunk of the living waters, and you have got no life before God yet.

Now, there may be some who are hindered by some of the following reasons : Some persons do not like the terms. They are too simple. Well, that is very natural. In the pride of man's heart he will not take this gift for nothing. He is like Naaman, who said, " Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? may I not wash in them and be clean ? " It was too little a thing for him to do. The way was too simple ; that great man to go like a little child at the word of the prophet, and bathe in the river of Israel, which, compared with the rivers of his native land, was a little brook. He thought that the prophet should come and strike his hand over the place and do something wonderful. That is often a hindrance to souls. " What," they say, " can I receive the Holy Ghost by believing in Jesus ? No ; impossible ? Surely I must do something." The terms are too simple, you think ; but, dear friends, I want to remind you that God knows much better than you

or I do, what are the best terms on which to give life to dead souls: and He has written them down and prescribed them with infinite wisdom; He has prescribed the only way in which you can get life, whatever you and I may think of it. You may think you could have devised some better way; at any rate, you think you ought to come with something—bringing prayers or repentance, or something in your hands as a price. But you must take salvation on God's terms, not your own. Your thoughts are not His thoughts: your ways are not His ways; and His ways are the best. He has made this glorious offer of the inestimable blessing of His Spirit for nothing—"without money and without price." Only thoroughly believe in Jesus, trust in the Saviour. He has made us that offer, and it is not for you or any man to say, "Oh, that is too cheap for me. That may be very well for publicans and harlots; it may do for dying thieves, who have no time to make themselves better; but not for me, for I am a moral person—a respectable person—and I expect that all this is to weigh something. Surely, that is not to be cast wholly away. Surely, I am not to receive this as a poor beggar, as the publican in the temple, as an outcast."

Yes, we must all come in the same way, for God says, "*There is no difference, for all have sinned.*" We all stand upon the same platform, and the moment you see what your position is, you will acknowledge that there is no other way that will do for you; it must be freely, for nothing, or you can never get it. People do not like God's terms, and so they are waiting and waiting. Ah! how long, dear friends, are you going to wait? Have you ever thought that this fortnight might have been your first fortnight in hell, where the cry is, "I am tormented in the flame"?—where there

is an endless thirst—where there is no such glorious word as this sounded forth, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.” Where words like those are passed away for ever. Where hope never comes. What a solemn thought this is! I want you to realise it. Just think—if it had not been for the long-suffering and mercy of God, you might have spent your first fortnight in the company of the devils in hell; you might have passed away and never have heard these words again!

What, then, has kept you from taking this offered blessing—the free mercy of God—the gift of God, which is eternal life? If you only knew your condition as a ruined sinner, you would not be quibbling about terms; you would not be cavilling about what God has offered. If your eyes were opened to see your fearful danger, you would have grasped at God’s offer as a drowning man grasps at a rope. You would have cast yourselves already into that fountain of blood that “is shed for many for the remission of sins,” and you would have taken that first draught of the river of the waters of life, of which if a man drink, he shall not thirst but live for ever. You do not know the danger that there is in delay. Oh, do you remember how solemnly Jesus spoke, when He said, “Now are these things hid from your eyes.” He did speak of a time when it would be too late. He said, “Many shall strive to enter in and shall not be able.” I think David might well say in that psalm, “Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the ungodly who forsake Thy law.”

Ay, it is a horrible thing. Men do not think about it. It is an awful thing to think of a soul awakened to see that long-despised mercy is offered no longer—that Jesus does not stand and wait—that the time is past, and that there is an unending eternity before him. It

will be an awful thing to awake then, and the wonder is, that when you think of it, horror does not seize hold upon *you*."

Oh, to think that there are souls in this room who are not awakened—who are sitting listening to invitations like this, and have open Bibles in their hands, and closed Bibles too in their houses, and do not know Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal. Oh, in the sight of that coming day, I would beseech you, if you value your souls, if you have learned to value them, to come to Jesus. "IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME." Can you have anything more glorious than eternal life, the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord ; not through anything that you can do, but freely offered to *every one that believeth*—that trusteth in Jesus ?

I beseech you even now, while you sit here to-night, and these words are spoken in your ears, look to Jesus. It is the looking, the believing, the trusting. He wants nothing else. He wants you to rest your soul upon His blessed name. And, fellow-sinner, I would to-night afresh tell you that there is a free pardon for *you*—an eternal life for *you* whoever you are in this room ; and that it is at your own peril that you wait any longer—that you even wait till you leave these doors. I would ask you now, "beseeching you, for Christ's sake, be ye reconciled to God." Why ? "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin"—His own Son ; He hath made *Him* to be *sin for us*. He put away the sin. He bore the sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Take it. Take it now. God help you—every one that is conscious that up to this moment he has not accepted what Jesus has been offering—to come *now*.

Let me now read once more the verses we are considering. "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)"

I do not think I shall have time to-night to say all I wanted; but, at any rate, just let us take up this truth first of all—that *they who believe in Jesus*—simply trust in Jesus, *do receive the Holy Ghost*. That is a literal fact, that every one that trusts in Jesus does receive the Holy Spirit of God, to be in him an indwelling Spirit—really to abide in his heart. Now here this gift was spoken of as something to come after. They had not received the Holy Ghost yet. Why? "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." To them, therefore, it was something to come after. But when Jesus was glorified, when He could say, "I have finished the work that Thou gavest Me to do"—when, as the great High Priest, He had taken the blood and gone into the holy place not made with hands—into the presence of God, thereby making the atonement for sin once and for ever; then, and then only, could the blessing come forth from God's presence. Jesus must be glorified first. If you look at the 16th chapter of St. John and the 7th verse, you will see that He said, "It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you."

Now we find that that was actually fulfilled, when our Lord Jesus had risen, had ascended to His Father's right hand, and all the disciples waited till they should receive the promise of the Father, which was the Holy

Spirit. And therefore, when Peter stood up on the day of Pentecost, seven weeks after the resurrection of Jesus, he proclaimed that then the Holy Ghost was to be given to every one that believed in Him. Acts ii. 38 : " Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and *ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*" It is not a mere contingency, a possible thing ; it was a *certainty*. " Then they that gladly received his word were baptized," and the fruits of the Spirit were at once evident in their lives. It is not distinctly stated there that they received the Holy Ghost, but it was seen in their lives. They immediately began to live as those only could who had received the Holy Spirit of God. Peter again says, " Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses of these things ; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given"—mark this : " whom God *hath given* to them that obey Him " (Acts v. 31, 32). Therefore, every one that obeyed Jesus—that came to Him—that believed on Him—received the Holy Ghost.

Paul, in speaking to those who trusted in Christ, says : " In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation : in whom also, after that ye believed, *ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise*" (Eph. i. 13). There is a little alteration that ought to be made here. The word " after " is not in the original. There is only one word—" In whom also *believing* [or, having believed] ye were sealed." ¹ The two things take place together. It was not a thing that took place some time after, but when they believed in Jesus they did receive the Holy Ghost.

¹ Dean Alford renders it " *at your believing.*"

All the apostles just tell us this great truth, that the Church collectively, and believers individually, are the receivers of the Holy Spirit ; that He comes and dwells in them—as it is said, “ Ye are the temple of God : and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you.”

There are two mistakes which people often make. They say, “ I believe in Jesus, and have not received the Spirit.” Now that is not true, it is a mistake, and you know any mistake will hinder our peace—any mistake about God’s truth, be it ever so small. But this is a great mistake. If a sinner believes in the Lord Jesus Christ, if he has committed himself to Him as one that cannot save himself, then he *has* received the Holy Ghost. He has not any right to say—I believe, and yet have not received the Holy Ghost. He is doubting God’s word. “ Well,” but a person says, “ if I had received the Holy Ghost I should be conscious of something in me—I should expect some evidence.” That is true, but what kind of results do you expect to be produced by the Holy Ghost as a proof that He dwells in you ? I know that some say, “ I should like to feel much happier ; I see others who receive the Holy Spirit, and they are happy ; and I do not think I have received the Holy Ghost, because I do not feel this, and that, or the other ” ; and they expect to receive something they do not know how to describe, which they suppose to be the witness of the Spirit, when they think it will be an undoubted fact, that they have received the Holy Ghost. Now if you are measuring God’s truth by your own feelings, do not wonder that you are making a mistake. Your feelings have nothing to do with what God has said. He has stated that every one who believes in Jesus shall and does receive the Holy Ghost.

Then there is another mistake. “ I cannot believe in

Jesus *till* I receive the Holy Ghost." Some persons think they must first receive the Holy Ghost, and then believe. Mind, I am not speaking about the work of the Spirit in awakening a soul, in convincing a sinner of his need of a Saviour, in showing him what he is ; that is all the work of the Spirit. No man was ever convinced of his need of Christ without the work of God the Holy Ghost. But I say, *that* is not receiving the Spirit. That is not receiving and drinking the living water. The Lord said, "When He is come He will reprove *the world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8). The work of the Spirit *upon* man's heart, convincing him of sin and showing him his need of a Saviour, and of the righteousness of God that is provided for them that believe, is a perfectly distinct thing from the reception of that Spirit *into* his heart. It is therefore incorrect to say, I must receive the Holy Ghost before I believe, because the words we have been reading show us that it is the opposite way. "You must *come* to Me *and drink*." The Holy Ghost is given to them that obey, not to them that disobey. It is they who "*believed*" who were "sealed with the Holy Ghost of promise" (Eph. i. 13). And so when persons say, I cannot believe, I am waiting and praying for the Holy Spirit, I hope that soon I shall receive it, and then I shall be able to believe ; they are not taking God's word, they are not obeying Him by immediately coming to Christ, as those whom God has invited, commanded, and urged to come and receive of Him that which He offers. Let us beware of these two mistakes. It is true of every *believing* soul, be he the youngest one in this room or the eldest, that he or she is a receiver of God's Spirit.

Two thoughts more and I shall conclude. The

Spirit of God dwells in you as the author of your life. He is called here "*living water*." Having the Spirit of Christ, you have life because you have Christ; and "HE THAT HATH THE SON OF GOD HATH LIFE"; and "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of His," because Christ only has *living* souls. He is the author of life, and that eternal life. Oh, lay hold of this. I was thinking to-day what a wonderful thing it is, how the devil has brought up the doctrine in these days, that men are not to be sure that they have eternal life when they believe in Jesus. Why, it seems on reading the Bible to be a plain truth, that stares us in the face in every page of God's Scriptures, that it is an utter impossibility for a man to believe in Jesus and not to *have* eternal life. It *must* be eternal for a thousand reasons. But people make mistakes about it. They do not see whereon the great fact rests that they have eternal life. And this is one among others, that God's eternal Spirit dwells in them. The Spirit of Christ is their life, and that is therefore an *eternal* life, because He has said, "The Spirit of truth *shall abide with you for ever*." Oh, what a glorious thing to have, and to *know* that we have, as believers, eternal life in Jesus! We do not sufficiently think what it is. We do not realise it. We do not lay hold of it as a real actual fact. We ~~are~~ measuring it by our feelings, instead of taking up God's Word which cannot lie. We know what it is to enjoy temporal life. In a few days spring will be coming, and then those of us who ~~are~~ are blessed with health, youth, strength, freedom from care, will know what it is to enjoy the glorious spring morning, and to feel our life exulting, and the blood running faster in our veins. Life is a pleasure. The very fact of having life on such a morning makes one glad, and one feels that it is a real thing. It is, as far as it goes,

a pleasant thing to feel the warm air, and to hear the birds singing, and to see the buds bursting forth into life, but it is passing away ; but you, if you believe, have ETERNAL LIFE, and that can NEVER pass away. The "fashion of this world is passing away," and all these things in a few days will have passed away, and illness, weakness, old age, and death may come, but *eternal life* will not pass away. The Christian is the possessor of eternal life, and of him the Saviour says, "He that liveth and believeth in Me shall never die," for after you believe in Jesus the death of this life is a mere nothing ; for He has taken away the sting of death, which is sin. Oh that we could take this truth and walk in it ; that through the gift of God, a never-ending, glorious, blessed, happy life is mine, because Christ is mine, and I am His.

But not only is the Spirit the author and giver of eternal life, for "it is the Spirit that *quickeneth*" ; but He is called by another name here, not only "living water," but that name by which He is the most frequently mentioned, the *Holy Spirit*—the *Holy Ghost*. Ah, that means something ! That name is not repeated again and again for nothing. It might have been enough to call Him the Spirit, but He is the *Holy Spirit*. Now, mark this. First there is *life*, and then there is *holiness*. First the Spirit of God comes and dwells in you as your life, for He is the Spirit of Christ ; and then as the author of your holiness, the author of every good thought, word, and work. He who is the author of the one is the author of the other. But we must take them in God's way. We cannot be holy without the Holy Ghost, for our spirits are evil. But we must first be quickened by the Spirit ; and that is only by the Holy Spirit coming into our hearts, and when He is

once there, He is there as the power by which we are to be holy in our lives. The sinner, it is true, is made fit for heaven the moment he believes in Jesus (Col. i. 12). In Christ he is at once fit to enter into the city of angels and redeemed souls, because his fitness is in Christ, his meetness is in Jesus and not in himself. He is a "new creature" in Christ Jesus, and with the new creature God finds no fault. But then the Spirit dwells in you to make you holy, to make you walk in holiness. Oh, if we could lay hold upon this! Why does St. Paul press home upon believers again and again this truth, "Your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost"? What is it for, but that they may know whom they have dwelling in them, and use that mighty power that they may serve God; use the Holy Ghost that dwells in them as their Friend, as the one who is always with them, and who strengthens them to do all things for God? Do you want to overcome a sinful lust, a sinful temptation, a sinful thought? It must be through the Spirit—"If ye, *through the Spirit*, do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live";—and in no other way. And the reason why you and I so little succeed in overcoming the evil habits and powers of our old nature is, that we do not depend upon the Holy Ghost to do it for us. If you want to do any work for God, it must be by the power of Him "who worketh in you to will and to do," that you must succeed. Oh, then, remember this, if you are a believer, God's Spirit dwells in you, and you are no longer your own. "Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are *not your own*. For ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20). Why has the Holy Ghost come down from God to dwell in the believer's heart? To take

possession of him for God ? It is to assert His dominion over the man, and a blessed dominion it is when you know how to submit to it.

Oh that we could go forth this evening with a deeper realisation of this truth—I have believed in Jesus; the Spirit led me, and now the Spirit dwells in me never to leave me ; to be my help, my strength, my teacher, my guide into all truth ; the one who is to open to me the Scriptures, to show to me the things about Jesus, the things to come, to reprove me. Oh, dear friends, remember that word, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.”

Have we, then, *all* received the Spirit of God ? How is it with all of you ? I began by speaking to those who were unsaved, because they have never accepted the invitation. Let me read it again in your ears—“IF ANY MAN THIRST, LET HIM COME UNTO ME AND DRINK.” It is *free*, it is *for nothing*, it is *now*, it is *for ever*, to every soul that comes to Jesus. Do not then go away without accepting what God offers. Oh, what a sad thing it is to look and to feel there must be *some* here who have not yet received the Holy Ghost ! I am not speaking of any individual, because I am not a judge of your hearts, but it is a truth which some of you know of yourselves this very night. You must say of yourselves, I have not received the Spirit of God. Well then, the only thing the Word says of you is, “that ye are none of Christ’s.” He cannot own you. If He comes to-night to take up His people, He cannot take up you ; but still the Word stands written, “Come unto me and drink.” Do not turn away. Do not despise that offered mercy. The blood of Jesus Christ has been shed, and now God in His grace offers to you the gift, the living water, of which if a man drink, he shall not thirst for ever. Amen.

LIVING WATERS FLOWING

JOHN vii. 37-39

“In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

WE have considered this subject, dear friends, on the two previous evenings. On the first evening we looked at the glorious proclamation that Jesus made of the river of the water of life—none other than God’s own Holy Spirit—to any man who would receive the Spirit through Him. And then, the other evening, we considered the truth that those who do believe on Jesus do actually, really, truly receive the Holy Ghost to dwell in them for ever. I do not want to go over the old ground again, but I wish you to see to-night, from the 38th verse, what the consequences are to others of a sinner’s believing in Jesus. We are told, in unmistakable language, that he becomes then *a channel of blessing to others*: “He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.”

But before going into that, there are two points I should like to touch upon, which will help us a little to understand the verse, before we look at the practical truths and doctrines that are stated in it. First, the

quotation of Scripture which our Lord makes ; and secondly, the expression which He uses, " Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." First, the quotation which He makes—" As *the Scripture* hath said." Now, the remarkable thing is that when you refer to the Scripture you do not find any verse like this. But it seems that our Lord joined several scriptures together, and gave the general sense of them all ; just as you find in 2 Cor. vi. 16, 18, where a number of passages from different parts of the Old Testament are all brought together in one to prove a certain doctrine. Our Lord refers here to certain passages in the Word of God ; and amongst them I think of the following : First of all, Prov. x. 11 and 21—" The mouth of a righteous man is a *well of life*." " The lips of the righteous *feed* many." Then in Prov. xiii. 14 there is another word which seems especially to be referred to. " The law of the wise is a *fountain of life*"—rivers of living water—" to depart from the snares of death " (chap. xv. ver. 7). " The lips of the wise *disperse* knowledge"—spread it abroad (chap. xvi. 22). " Understanding is a *well-spring of life* to him that hath it " (chap. xviii. 4). " The words of a man's mouth are as *deep waters*, and the *well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook*."

Now, we see here some of the passages which I think our Lord had in mind ; for there is no particular text that answers word for word with what He said. And we learn this important truth from this, that he who is called a *righteous* or a *wise* man in the Old Testament, is explained by the New to be he that believeth in Jesus. We are told in Proverbs that these things are true of the *righteous* man, and we are told by Christ that they are true of the man who *believes in Him*. So the righteous man, and the man

who believes in Jesus, are the same. If you want to be righteous you must believe in Jesus. There is no other way of becoming the "righteous," or the "just" man, but by believing in Him who is "the Lord our righteousness."

Then the next point is the expression, "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water," and we learn something from that by reference to the Old Testament. I think I said on a previous occasion, that we might render the word here "heart": and if you refer with me to the 13th chapter of Proverbs, you will see the different ways in which the same word is translated in the Old Testament. Chap. xiii. 25: "The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his *soul*; but the belly of the wicked shall want." So, the belly of the wicked is opposed to the soul of the righteous. They mean, therefore, the same. Chap. xx. 27: "The *spirit* of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly." That is, the conscience that God uses to make bare a man's heart, to show himself to himself. Then in chap. xxii. 17, 18, you will see a passage that I shall ask you to refer to again afterwards. "Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them *within thee*." (Margin, "in the belly.") Therefore, the phrase means what David expresses in the 51st Psalm as "the inward parts." "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." Then in Job xxxii. 18, Elihu says, "For I am full of matter; the spirit within me [or in the margin, "belly"] constraineth me." And in Job xv. 35, speaking of the wicked, it says, "They conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity, and their belly prepareth deceit."

I have only referred to these in order to explain the otherwise rather curious expression that we find in John—"He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And we may learn this truth by the explanation that we get out of the Old Testament, that it is the *heart* of men that is meant—the inward part. It is not the head; it is "the within," "the soul," "the heart," "the spirit," from which are to flow these rivers of living waters, of which, if a man drink, "he shall never thirst."

Now let us to-night, having cleared the ground in this way, consider what the Lord Jesus says, taking first the statement that a believer is a channel of blessing to others, and noticing its illustration in the New Testament; and then, secondly, the glorious promise.

First of all, we notice, the Lord makes a statement—"He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." When Christ was here, He was the life of the world. He was living in a dead world, a charnel-house of dead souls, as it were: and He communicated this life to all who came to Him. But when He ascended, He left His people here to fill His place in some measure and to some extent. And, therefore, just before He left them, He said to them, "As My Father hath sent Me into the world, so have I sent you into the world"; and again, "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." Twice over He says that, showing that there is a very important sense in which believers are to fill the place, as the members, that Jesus Christ the Saviour had filled as the Head when He was down here. He was the fountain of life and the only source of blessing, and that He, and He alone, is to all eternity; but they are to be the channels through which that blessing is to flow

forth to others ; they are not to give, but to convey life. And this is what you find proved by facts. Take the 4th chapter of John, a passage with which we are all familiar, and which shows forth clearly this glorious truth, that believers in Jesus become a channel of blessing to dead souls around them. There is the story of the woman of Samaria—ignorant, sinful, dead. The Lord Jesus meets with her. He tells her of the river of the water of life. He says, “ If thou knewest the gift of God, thou wouldest have asked, and He would have given thee *living water*.” He reveals to her the living water. He reveals to her *Himself*. He says, “ I am the Christ.” What does she do immediately ? She becomes a channel of blessing to others. She immediately “ left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did : is not this the Christ ? ” And what was the result ? Why, in the 39th verse we read that “ many of the Samaritans believed on Him for the saying of the woman.” She became such an effectual channel of blessing, that other sinners believed in the Saviour ; and in the 41st verse we read that “ many more believed because of His own word,” and they said, “ We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.”

Now look at John i. 40, “ One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him (Jesus), was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother.” And what did he do immediately ? “ He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah.” Out of him was flowing at once the living water. He could not keep it within himself. He must go and tell his nearest and dearest friend—his own brother—that he had found Jesus ; and immediately after that

(ver. 45) Philip is found of Christ, Philip goeth forth and findeth Nathanael, and says, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, *Jesus of Nazareth*."

There are other instances in the Gospel; but now turn to the 2nd chapter of Acts, and see what happens there. The promise was now truly fulfilled. The Holy Ghost was sent down from heaven in His fulness. Whatever measure of blessing people had received of Jesus before, it was scanty compared with what was given on the Day of Pentecost. We find Peter using almost the same words which Christ used about the living water. Ver. 33: "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the *Holy Ghost*, He hath *shed forth* [poured forth] this which ye now see and hear." And then he makes the proclamation to all that heard him, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." What is the result? Why, that in that dead and barren city, the rivers of living water so flowed forth that three thousand men came to Jesus at once, and in the next chapter we read that the number was increased to five thousand.

But were Peter and the apostles to be the only channels of blessing? Some people say that they were; but the word of God tells a very different story. If you look at the 8th chapter of Acts, you will find that others besides the apostles were used to spread abroad the knowledge of this risen Saviour. For after it is said (ver. 1) that because of persecution they were all scattered abroad, the word says dis-

tinctly, "Except the apostles." The apostles, therefore, remained at Jerusalem. Yet in ver. 4 we read that those who were scattered abroad "went everywhere preaching the word." And what was the result? Samaria received the word of God; and "when they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen" travelled abroad preaching the word, "the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (chap. xi. vers. 19-21).

Now mark that. The *believer* becomes a channel. It is not merely the apostle, the clergyman, the bishop, the minister, the teacher authorised by man; He, who alone can give the real authority, says, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. *He that believeth on Me*, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

And it *was* living water—like the waters we read of in Ezekiel, of which it is said, "everything shall live whither the river cometh" (chap. xlvii. 9). Read the history of the Acts. We have not time to go into it now, but chapter after chapter tells us of places—Lydda, Derbe, Joppa, Syria, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, desert places—where there was not one atom of knowledge of God's dear Son—perfect charnel-houses of dead souls, where the apostles and early preachers went forth spreading this river. They gave the same message wherever they went, that Jesus was exalted to give the Holy Ghost to every one that believed, and thus the words that we find in Isaiah were to a great measure fulfilled—"In the wilderness, waters brake out; the parched ground became a pool; and the desert land, springs of water." And so it is to this day. The believer becomes a channel of blessing. Not that he gives the Holy Ghost, for God gives the Spirit through

Christ ; but he is the means of pointing the soul to a living Christ.

But secondly, it is *a glorious promise*. "He that believeth in Me, out of his belly *shall* flow rivers of living waters." I think we get into wrong ground whenever we lose sight of this—that it is not a command, but *a promise*. It is not so much a duty as *a privilege*. We often take up work for God (I am speaking to believers) as a mere duty ; but God has raised us far above that. I do not mean to say that it is not a duty, but we can look at it in a higher light—as a glorious privilege. And therefore it is said, not that rivers must or ought to flow, but "*shall* flow." There is no bondage in this service, but, on the contrary, "perfect freedom."

" In a service which Thy will appoints
There are *no bonds* for me,
For my inmost heart is taught the truth
That makes Thy children free ;
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a *life of liberty*."

It is a privilege to every believer to spread abroad the living water, as far as God gives him opportunity. Do not let us lose sight of this. You know we do not teach our children that they are to be kind, unselfish, and do good in the world, merely as a duty but as a privilege. If you teach them rightly you say, "You *may*—not you *must*—give this to so-and-so" ; and that is the way in which God always teaches us. It may be that we need the *command*, because we often get into the place of disobedient children ; but when we are working in the sunlight of God's countenance, all duties become privileges. Now for a moment, think of what it is to be a channel

of blessing to others. If you had been cured of some dangerous illness, and knew that the remedy that cured you was infallible, would not you gladly spread it abroad? Why, as long as you lived in this world, so full of disease and of sickness, your tongue could never be silent. If we know what it is to drink of the living water, are our tongues to be silent? Are we not to praise the mighty Physician's care and power, that have done so much for us? Yes, we may and ought to spread this knowledge abroad; and it is a glorious privilege to live here, in a dying world, where there is such darkness and death, and to be the channels of mercy to others—to be signposts to point to glory.

Further, there are some thoughts that must occur to you, if you meditate on these words, as well as to me, in reference to the position and responsibilities of the believer in this world. And this is one, that he is to consider that God deems it needful for him to abide here to bless others. He would often say, "I should like to depart and to be with Christ!" The madman who was healed prayed the Lord that he might be with Him, but "Jesus suffered him not," but left him in the land of Gadara, to bear witness to Him who had done so great things for him. Paul says in the Philippians, "to depart, and to be with Christ, is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more *needful for you*." One great reason, I believe, why God leaves His people here, is that they may be, as this verse tells us they are to be, channels of blessing to others. People are often so occupied with themselves, that they think that they are not taken to be with Christ, because they are not ripe for glory—not ready for heaven. Well, that is perhaps true in one sense, because I believe that God has

various ranks in heaven, and that some persons will have a greater fulness of blessing — or rather a greater capacity for enjoying blessings—than others. And God may be keeping the believer here, to fit him to fill a special place which He has prepared for him. But I believe this, and I think the word teaches us, that the sinner that believes in Jesus is fit for heaven the moment he believes. “He *hath made us meet* to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col. i. 12). One moment he is an unpardoned, hell-deserving sinner; the next he is an heir of glory. Because do you not see, dear friends, that it is not the “old man”—the old nature—that is ever made fit for heaven. We often suppose that people go on improving till they are ready to die. The old nature does not improve, and cannot improve, for it is “corrupt” (Eph. iv.), and a corrupt thing is incapable of improvement. The “new man is created in righteousness and true holiness,” and, though that new creation may grow, and be more fully developed, it is yet like the first creation before sin came in, “very good.” It is therefore perfect and complete, and the moment the new creation takes place in the sinner’s heart, he has in him the germ of glory. He may be only the little babe, but his limbs are as complete as the old man’s. He is ready to enter into “the inheritance of the saints in light.” And, therefore, I say, it is not to make people fit for glory, though it may be to make them fit for a certain measure of glory, that the Lord keeps His people here. No, dear friends, the Lord says, it is “needful to abide in the flesh” for the benefit of others. And this is one of the great truths that this verse tells us. You are left here as a believing sinner, not merely that you may grow up into the likeness

of Christ, but that you may lead others to Him. And thus :

“ Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoever estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate ;
And a work of lowly love to do
For the Lord on whom I wait.”

Wherever I am—whether in the house or garden, the kitchen or stable, the office in London or the church, in the railway or in the cab—there is no place where there is not some work to do for Jesus. Let us, dear fellow-believers in Jesus, lay hold on this more and more. You are not to be occupied with *self*, but to be a well-spring of life to others. Out of your lips “wisdom” is to proceed; *first* to those nearest and dearest to you. Let us remember that. Mothers to their children, wives and husbands to one another, brothers to sisters, masters to servants, servants to fellow-servants. If you are a believer, you are to be a channel of blessing to those who live in the house where you reside. We often lose sight of this. We so often think—ah! if I were in some other place I could do some great thing. No, where God puts you, *there* it is that the living water is to flow forth.

Another thought is this. The words we have read in the Proverbs lay great stress on a man’s word—on a man’s lips. “*The lips* of the righteous feed many,” and so on; but what is meant by the lips or the mouth of the righteous? The mouth is one of the channels through which the water is to flow forth. “Let your *speech* be always with grace.” “Life and death are in the power of the *tongue*.” What can the tongue do? Why, it can tell of Jesus Christ

—of the crucified, risen Saviour—of the gift of the Holy Ghost. But we also read, “Out of the *abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*.” It is not merely out of the head, it is out of the *heart*; and if the river of living water is to flow forth from you and me, it must be from a *full heart*; and the reason why we are so often slow to testify for our blessed Saviour in this dying world is because our hearts are not full.

Now just refer with me to Prov. xxii. 17, 18, because there is there a very interesting passage which bears strongly upon this subject: “Bow down thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thine heart unto my knowledge [or, unto the knowledge of me]. For it is a pleasant thing if thou keep them within thee.” If you drink of the river of the water of life, oh, how *pleasant* it is! But what does he go on to say? “They shall withal be fitted in *thy lips*.” Now in Colossians it is first said, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly”; and then follows, “Let your *speech* be always with grace”; because, if the word does dwell in you, your speech will always be full of grace, seasoned with salt. That is how it gets there. “They shall withal be fitted in *thy lips*.” And what is the purpose for which God has made known to His people the certainty of their salvation, resting on His word? “Have not I,” he continues (ver. 20), “written to thee excellent things in counsel and knowledge, that I might *make thee know the certainty* of the words of truth?” for to establish the hearts of His children in the knowledge of His grace and truth is the first blessed object of the Lord—to make us *certain*. Why, then, should any of us be satisfied with *uncertainty*? Why should we say, I don’t know, I am not sure, I cannot be sure? God has said, “That I might make thee know the *certainty*.” “Have not

I written to thee excellent things in counsel and knowledge, that I might make thee to know the certainty of the words of truth?" If you are not certain, you do not believe the whole truth. If there is a doubt in the heart of a single believing sinner as to his salvation, what does it prove?—unbelief. You believe in Jesus, but you do not believe what God has said about Him. You believe part of the gospel, but you do not believe the whole truth, or you would have perfect peace.

Then it goes on, "That thou mightest answer the words of truth to them that send unto thee." You are not only to be certain yourself, but you are to be able to give forth the certain sound—the words of truth. Therefore, you must get certainty yourself if you are to give forth a certain sound to others. This passage says, "It is a pleasant thing if thou *keep* them within thee"; and so I say, dear friends—or rather, it is not I, but God who says—"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." If you want to be a channel of blessing, a communicator in your measure of the river of the water of life to others around you, see to it that your heart is filled with Christ. Out of an empty heart, or out of a half-filled heart, there may come a little, but there will be very great labour about it. If the well is only half full, you will have to wait a long time at the wheel before you get the water up; but if it is full, it flows over. And so with us. If we are working for Jesus, we know that the effectual way to spread the blessing is to have our hearts full of the Lord Jesus Christ—full of the Holy Ghost. "Be ye filled with the Spirit." "He that believeth on Me out of his belly shall *flow* rivers of living water."

Another thought is this: that it is not only through

the lips that this blessing is to flow; and we lose sight of a great deal of truth if we forget that. It is comparatively an easy thing to talk about Christ, but how do we *live*? Mark the wonderful directions that God has given for our learning, in 1 Pet. iii.; where he contemplates the most touching case that can possibly be conceived—the case of a wife having an unconverted husband; one whom she lives with, and loves, and perhaps has long prayed for, and yet does not see his conversion; and the two, though one flesh, have not got yet one heart. The most heart-rending case of all is this case. What does he say, then? “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word *be won by the conversation of the wife.*” And the word “conversation” means there the *life*; it does not mean what we speak. “Won by the life!” And what is true of the wife with the husband, is equally true of the husband with the wife, and of other relationships of life. It is what our life is that tells. Oh, dear friends, let us ask ourselves not only what we speak of at meetings, or what we preach, or the number of tracts we give, or visits we make to the bedsides of the sick and dying, or the instructions we give to our children, our servants, or our neighbours; but what is the testimony of our life? Is there flowing up from your life and mine such a sweet savour of Jesus, that others, who perhaps do not hear the gospel, are nevertheless won to Christ? It is a very solemn question, and one that ought to make us think deeply of what our inconsistencies are, and how many may be stumbling who hear and see the profession we make, but who do not see a corresponding effect in our lives.

Again, remember to whom we bear witness. It is to Jesus. The gift of the Holy Spirit is through Him—not through ourselves. The very fact of testifying to Jesus ought to induce a never-ceasing, holy watchfulness. If we take His name on our lips—if we say we have drunk of the living stream—if we bear witness—that should produce a holy watchfulness in us that others may see that we walk in Him. “He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also so to walk, *even as He walked*” (1 John ii. 6). There is a great deal of talking, as we know, about self, and a great deal of living so that others may take knowledge of *us*: but what does Christ say? “That they may see your good works?” Yes, but not to glorify *you*. “To glorify *your* Father that is in heaven.” Oh, may God give us grace so in our words and lives to testify of Jesus, that from us may go forth rivers of living water; and that in the homes where we live, and the places where we work, instead of a barren, dreary desert, there may spring up many trees of the Lord’s planting!

Then just one other thing, and that is this: remember, dear friends, that the believer is not the giver, but only the channel—not the reservoir, but only the pipe—nothing more, nothing less. We are not to attribute any power to ourselves, but to remember that “it is not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord.” It does not matter what kind of a channel you may be in one respect. It does not matter through what kind of pipes the water or the gas may come into our houses; the only thing is that they should convey it. Some pipes may be made of lead, others of gold, but if they convey to others the blessing of the living water, they do equally well. It is not you who do the work. God

is the giver of eternal life—the giver of His Son—the giver of His Spirit. You do not give the living water, but the living water in a sense flows through you ; and it is a solemn question for each of us, not—what is my position in the world, not—what I am made of, but, is the living water flowing forth from me to others ? Oh, what a little thing will prevent the gas from coming through the pipe ! What a little thing will prevent the water flowing freely ! What a little thing will prevent in our lives the grace of Christ, and the life of Christ, from flowing forth freely ! Let us see to this. A very little thing will hinder it ; but remember this, dear friends, the reservoir is *always full*. The channel may be dry, but the fountain never is, for it is up in heaven. If anything happens to the supply of water in your house, what is the thought that occurs to you ? Something is the matter with the pipe. You do not think the reservoir is dry ; but you send to the people whose business it is to attend to the pipe, and you have it set right. Now, it is just so with the human channels of God's blessing. Where you see imperfection and failure, do not attribute it to the fountain, but to the worthless pipe. Let us remember that. The fountain is always "*the fountain of life*." May God help us to realise in greater measure the truth of this wondrous verse, "He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

I feel, and so must many of you feel who come to these meetings, that we must confess to ourselves that we are very poor channels. We do not spread abroad the living water. There is death all around us, men dying, perishing for lack of knowledge, and our tongues are tied. Why ? Because our hearts are not full. I do not think people need so much

stirring to work for God, as exhorting to walk close to Christ; for I believe that, if we walk close to Christ, we shall witness to others. We shall then have that beautiful passage fulfilled in us (Isa. lviii.), "The Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, *whose waters fail not.*" "With joy shalt thou draw water out of the wells of salvation"—not for yourself only, but for others.

Now, dear friends, are there any here to-night who have not taken this living water for themselves? What is *your* heart and mouth? "The mouth of fools breatheth out foolishness." "Life and death are in the power of the tongue"; and if your life and your lips are not telling of blessing, telling of life, you are speaking of death. You know that in the parable we have the husbandman speaking about the barren tree. He says, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" The word really is, why does it *hurt* the ground?—why does it do injury?—why does it deprive the ground of blessing! That is what a barren tree is doing. If there is any soul here without Christ, not having the Spirit of Christ, you are not blessing but injuring others. It is either one or the other. It is either life or death that is in the power of the tongue. You are either helping to bring souls to Christ, or by your words and life you are helping to people hell as fast as you can. And if you get to hell yourself, you will have the misery, the eternal agony, of seeing others whom you might through Jesus have led to glory, but whom your life and words have led down that steep road to the bottomless pit.

What shall I tell you to-night? Why, dear friends,

that the fountain is open *now*, and that you may drink of that fountain opened by the death of Jesus; it was Jesus bearing your sins, dying in your place, that opened that fountain; it was the Just One taking the sinner's place, and bearing the curse of God due to you, that enables now the living God to be just, and the giver of His own Holy Spirit to every sinner that believes on His Son. Why should you be barren when Christ has died? Oh, I have seen two such glorious instances of the power of truth since we were here last! One was the case of an elderly man, who is said to be in his last illness, and I believe he is. He began to say what a wretched sinner he was. He knew he was dying, and he could see no hope. He said, "I have been such a wretched sinner, I never could hope to be saved." One tried to put before him the truth about the blood of Jesus being perfectly sufficient to cleanse him, that God had accepted the sacrifice, and would accept every one that would trust in Him. No, he would not see it, would not believe it. I went to him the next day, and found him more distressed than before. I felt there was hope. I do feel there is hope when a man begins to say, I am a wretched sinner, I am too great a sinner to be saved. Christ saves the great sinners, those who seem great sinners to themselves. Well, two days afterward, I went again. The old man jumped up from his sofa, and came to me with joy in his face. "Are you better?" "Oh yes, much better." "Better in your soul?" "Oh yes, the burden is gone, I see it all now, it is all clear." I do not know that I use his exact words, but he was resting on this fact, that the blood of Jesus Christ did cleanse from all sin; and his testimony was, "He will never let me go." We have to praise God that this poor dying man was resting on Jesus.

Now, dear friends, can you say that? Is the burden gone? Have you drunk the living waters? Have you got satisfaction where God gets it, in the death, the righteousness, the work of the Lord Jesus Christ? Depend upon it, if you are satisfied with what satisfies God, you need not fear.

The other instance occurred only two hours ago. A man who had himself drunk of the living water, and who for years has been occupied as a city missionary in a dark part of London, sent to me this afternoon to say that he was dying. A few weeks before he was well and strong. An abscess had formed, and they did not know how long he would live. I went there. Oh, what a glorious testimony he bore to the power and grace of Christ! He had only one thing to say, "Jesus is mine." "Jesus will never leave me, He has enabled me to go through all the suffering, and He has enabled me to leave all, wife and children, in His hands." Such was his testimony. He had himself proved what it was to drink of the living water. He had come to Christ, and his life had been spent in spreading abroad the gospel, in being a channel of blessing to others. And does Christ forsake him? No, He never will, and He is the same Jesus I have preached to you to-night, waiting to bless you now, filled with compassion, mercy, and forgiveness for you. Will you trust Him? Oh, do not let the time pass, do not let the night pass, so far as you are responsible (and a fearful responsibility it is, to hear of Christ and to turn away), do not let this night pass as many others have passed, without coming to Jesus as a lost sinner, and resting your soul on Him. "Ask, and you *shall* receive"; you shall receive this living water, you shall receive the Holy Ghost the Comforter; not to be a parting guest, but

to "abide with you *for ever*," and to change your wretched, hell-deserving soul into one made white in the blood of the Lamb, and made meet for heaven, and to be an heir of glory through faith in Jesus. May God bless His word !

GLORY

THE HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP

PHILIPPIANS iii. 20

“ For our conversation [citizenship] is in heaven.”

“ I TELL you weeping ” (ver. 18). What made Paul weep? He was not a man to weep for trifles. He could say of “ bonds and afflictions,” “ None of these things move me.” “ I endure all things.” But there was one thing he could not endure, one affliction that could move him, and that was the sight of men, who, while they professed to be disciples of the Saviour, “ served not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly,” and who, whilst bearing the, to him, unspeakably precious name of Christ, hesitated not to lead a life which brought on that name nothing but contempt.

Over such men Paul could and did weep. The thoughtless world could laugh (for “ fools make a mock at sin ”) at the wretched inconsistency of those who pretended to have their treasure in heaven, and yet grasped eagerly at the things of the earth, and would doubtless despise them too: but Paul did neither; *he* wept for the dishonour done to that cross of Christ, of which they were the worst “ enemies.” He wept for the injury inflicted on those who were just beginning to tread the narrow way, and who would be so grievously stumbled by the conduct of

these false brethren. And with something of that divine compassion which moved the heart of his Lord and Master, when He too wept over the self-righteous yet godless city, as He summed up its iniquities and foretold its approaching end, Paul wept for the wretched men themselves, for he knew that their "end was destruction."

And well might he weep, as he wrote that awful word. Well might David say, "Horror hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake Thy law." For as assuredly as Jesus told them of Capernaum and Bethsaida, that it would be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for them; so certainly will the destruction that awaits those who appropriate to themselves the name of Christ, either for the sake of gain or respectability, and have "a form of godliness," whilst they "deny its power," be an unspeakably terrible one.

But Paul did not mean them to dwell on the character or end of the wretched men, who brought such tenfold destruction on their souls by a false profession of Christianity. He was writing to *real* believers, and his object was both to caution them against the "false brethren" that were in their midst, and to show them by contrast what their life ought to be, who were in deed and in truth "partakers of Christ."

So after giving as the distinctive and final characteristic of the ungodly professors of religion, that they "*mind earthly things*," he introduces the description of the position and hope of the true follower of Jesus by the words, "For our conversion [literally 'citizenship'] is in heaven"; the "for" implying that this was the ground on which he had based the exhortation of verse 17, that they should "walk so as they had

him for an ensample," *i.e.*, of course so far as he followed Christ.

With these words let us occupy ourselves, and consider with God's help, and expecting His blessing, the qualification, privileges, and responsibilities of the heavenly citizen.

First, *his qualification*, that is, how he becomes a citizen of heaven.

A man is *not born such*, no earthly birth qualifies him for glory. Paul said of himself in verse 5, that he was "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews," and as such he had "much profit every way." But he was not thereby qualified for the heavenly inheritance. He was also a free-born Roman citizen (Acts xxii. 28), and thereby he possessed peculiar rights, but no right of entrance into "the new Jerusalem."

On the contrary, he said of himself and his brethren, "We were by nature *children of wrath*, even as others" (Eph. ii. 3). For the natural heart, being at enmity with God, inherits only condemnation and death, the just doom of all His enemies, and therefore earthly birth qualifies a man not for *heaven*, but for *hell*. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," and the "carnal" (or fleshly) mind being enmity against God, who is the ruler of that heavenly city, can never hope to enter its glorious gates as a citizen.

Nor, indeed, does it hope; an unrenewed man may hope to be *saved*, because he has a natural dread of that which the Word of God assures us awaits the *unsaved*; but he does not ever really hope to enter *heaven*, his earthly mind would be wretched in heaven; for his nature is unchanged, his tastes are all opposed to heavenly enjoyments, and those "pleasures" which are at "God's right hand" have no attraction for him

to whom the presence of a *holy* God would be a hateful, an intolerable thing.

No! it is not by birth; "child of hell," "ye are of your father the devil," were the terms used by Incarnate Truth to describe those who though "Abraham's seed" were nevertheless not "Abraham's children" (John viii. 37, 39), and who were the representatives of the natural and unconverted man in every age, notwithstanding the outward cloak of decent religion which they possessed, and which Christ-rejecting hearts like to wear still, for appearance' sake.

A man does *not* become a citizen of heaven by *residence*. Foreigners, after residing a certain time in another country, can be naturalised, and thus become citizens, but it is only after residence; and who has complied with this condition, or who can comply with it? One, and only One, ever did. He who, while He asserted His own heavenly origin, and His consequent knowledge of "heavenly things," yet at the same time declared that He was the sole possessor of this qualification, for He said, "*No man* hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, the Son of Man, which is in heaven."

He was, therefore, the *only One* who had right to the heavenly city by residence there.

Paul, it is true, was "caught up into the third heaven," but that gave him no right to dwell there; whatever right he had, had been acquired long before.

So we can ground no claim on that score. "Aliens and strangers" by nature, we had never resided there: whatever claims our forefather Adam had (and I doubt very much whether anything beyond earthly dominion was ever Adam's birthright), everything was forfeited when he fell, and we in him; for in him we died, and since heaven contains no dead

citizens, our title, if ever we had any, became at once void.

Again, a man does *not* become a citizen of heaven by *merit*. Here on earth men who are distinguished by noble birth, or have ennobled themselves by deeds of worth or valour, are presented with the freedom of this or that city, and their names are enrolled among its inhabitants. The heavenly citizenship is not thus obtained, for nothing short of *absolute perfection* is recognised as entitling any man to its privileges. The fair and specious claims that men in their blind self-righteousness present, such as "a good character," "a blameless life," "an amiable disposition," "a benevolent heart," "an upright walk," "a conscience that has nothing to accuse itself of," and "a strict attention to the ordinances of religion," when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary are all "*found wanting*"; for all are marred by sin, and however well they may have succeeded in securing the respect and love of their fellow-creatures they have yet failed in reaching that standard which can alone warrant any claim to the heavenly inheritance; for it is written, "ALL HAVE SINNED, AND COME SHORT OF THE GLORY OF GOD." After all, "*come short!*" Like the tower of Babel, its top yet fails to "reach unto heaven," grand and imposing as it may appear on earth. In such terms as these, has the Spirit of God written "*worthless*" upon all the excellences of the natural man, and declared that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

No, dear friends, it is not by having complied with any of these conditions that a sinner becomes a citizen of heaven. And yet the child of God has a claim, in which the light of God's judgment-seat will detect no flaw, and which is founded on each of them.

It is by birth, but not the natural one. To be a citizen of earth, you must have an *earthly* nature; to be a citizen of heaven, you must have the *heavenly*. "Ye must be born again" (or "from above"). "The Holy Ghost 'must' come upon thee, and the power of the Highest 'must' overshadow thee." There must be "a new creature" formed in you, even Christ, the Son of God. And how is this effected, do you ask? The 3rd chapter of John answers, through looking at, trusting on, *believing in a crucified Saviour*; as the dying Israelite was born again as to his natural life through *looking at the serpent*. So is the sinner who looks believingly to Jesus, the recipient *then and there* of a new, an everlasting life. "For as many as *received Him*, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that *believe on His name*, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John i. 12, 13).

And this is by the gospel; for, saith St. Peter, ye were "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, and this is the word which by *the gospel* is preached unto you."

Oh, how gloriously simple, how gloriously free! Faith in Jesus, trust in Jesus, the means whereby a dead sinner becomes "partaker of the Divine nature," and thus a "partaker of the heavenly calling," and a free-born citizen of heaven.

It is by residence, for believing in Jesus, you are made one with Him, "married to Him that is raised from the dead" (Rom. vii. 4), and therefore, as the bride becomes solely by virtue of union with her husband a joint-possessor of all his rights, so does the sinner, once and for ever united to Christ, become

a "joint-heir" with Him (Rom. viii. 17), whose *home* and *property* is all in glory.

It is by merit, and by merit which God Himself, the searcher of hearts, recognises as perfect, by a righteousness which the light of glory will only serve more fully to display in all its beauty.

That merit, that righteousness is CHRIST. Christ Himself, Christ THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD, given so freely, so entirely to every one that believeth, that the sinner who thus trusts in Jesus can say, "In the Lord I have righteousness" (Isa. xlv. 24). He is "the Lord our righteousness" (Jer. xxiii. 6). "He is made of God unto us righteousness" (1 Cor. i. 30). He was "made sin for us who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. v. 21). "And this righteousness is upon all them that believe" (Rom. iii. 22). For they "are justified from all things" (Acts xiii. 39). Such are the blessed statements of the Scriptures of God. And you will thus see how in Christ the believing sinner acquires both by birth, by residence, and by merit, a perfect title and claim to be recognised as a citizen of heaven.

Is there, then, any wonder, when we consider how utterly short all man's claims fall, and how sufficient a claim he can acquire by accepting Jesus, that Paul, after enumerating his privileges and claims as a Jew, his merits as a so-called religious character, should say of them all, in the previous part of this chapter, "I count *all things but loss* for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, *not having mine own righteousness*, which is of the law, but that which is through the

faith of Christ, *the righteousness which is of God* by faith " ?

Hereon, and on nothing else, was Paul's assurance of his citizenship grounded. Hereon must your assurance rest, if you wish to take up these words, and say, "Our citizenship is in heaven." A new birth by the power of the Holy Ghost, through faith in Jesus, and the possession of Christ as your alone righteousness, are the only grounds on which the Word of God warrants us to build our hopes of this glorious inheritance.

Having these, our assurance *may* be, and *ought* to be complete, since the life thus begun is, we are again and again told by our God, an *everlasting* one, and since that union with Christ, which makes you possessor of Him, and all that is His, is one which through all eternity can never be broken asunder.

We are therefore warranted in saying our citizenship *is* in heaven—not only shall be, but *is* ; we are not yet inhabitants of heaven, in its fullest sense, but we are its citizens, and we look for, as our home, that "city whose builder and maker is God."

Now, *what are the privileges of the heavenly citizen ?*

First, property, and that unlimited ! The citizen of heaven is, we have seen, a joint-heir with Christ, and Christ is "heir of ALL THINGS" (Heb. i. 2). Wonderful it may be, and undoubtedly is, surpassing our highest imaginations, that by the grace of God a child of wrath should be constituted joint-possessor with Jesus, of "*all things*." Mark, not merely saved, unspeakably great as the gift of salvation is, but made a *joint-heir with Christ* ; yet such is the grace of God. "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the

throne of glory" (1 Sam. ii. 8). Truly does He say, "My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. lv. 8, 9). Christ is "heir of all things"; and the people of God, the citizens of heaven, though not yet entered upon possession as the married wife, may yet, as the espoused bride of Christ (2 Cor. xi. 2), survey with delight the property of their glorious Lord.

They shall share His kingdom. Washed in the blood of Him that loved them, they are already "kings unto God" (Rev. i. 6). And Daniel (chap. vii.) tells us that the kingdom shall be theirs. In verses 13, 14, he beholds the everlasting dominion of the kingdom given unto one "like the Son of man"; and in verse 27 he is told that "the kingdom and dominion shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High"; so that *His* kingdom is *their* kingdom. "To him that overcometh" (compare 1 John v. 4, 5, and Rev. xii. 11) "will I grant to sit with me in my throne" (Rev. iii. 21). "This honour have all His saints" (Ps. cxlix. 9).

They shall share His glory. Three passages may suffice to prove this. Not only does Jesus say, "Father, I will that they whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory" (John xvii. 24). But in verse 22 He says, "The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them." *His* glory is *their* glory.

In Col. iii. 4 the promise is explicit—"When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear *with Him in glory!*"

And accordingly, in St. John's vision, as described in Rev. xxi. 10, 11, the expected hour is come, and

he beholds "that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, *having the glory of God!*"

These two things, the kingdom and the glory, comprise "all things." Mind, they are not the king, but the kingdom; not the husband, but the property. He, the Lord and Saviour, is the one great object of His people's hopes and desires, they "look for HIM" (Heb. ix. 28), but He shows us the "all things" that God gives His people "with Him" (Rom. viii. 32); and then exhorts and charges every one of us that we should "walk worthy of God, who hath called us unto His kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. ii. 11, 12).

And does not, should not this follow, dear friends? Can the heirs of such a kingdom be like those who "mind earthly things"? Ah! we know too well the exhortation in Col. iii. 1, to "set our affection on things above, not on things on the earth," is continually necessary. But why? Because we believe not the promises of God concerning this wondrous destiny. Content often with bare salvation, satisfied with forgiveness of sins, we care not to examine the deed of gift by which these glories are assured to the believer.

We are not like those of old who "*embraced* the promises," and looked eagerly for that better country, and that heavenly city; and is there, then, any wonder that our lives confess not, as theirs did, that "we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth"? (Heb. xi. 3, 16).

Unlike saints of later date even, many are ignorant of the riches of that "better and more enduring substance" that they have "in heaven," and it is therefore little wonder that their "goods" here are the chief objects of interest (Heb. x. 34).

Again and again does the command to a pilgrim life come, as of old, saying, "Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, for it is polluted" (Mic. ii. 10). But the eye of faith has ceased to contemplate the "rest that remaineth for the people of God," or does it but seldom, and the carnal mind, the old nature, gladly seeks its pleasures and comforts in its old home, down here.

There is nothing to astonish us in seeing a man grasping after earthly riches, honours, pleasures, who has never had a glimpse of the wondrous and enduring glories of the world to come. It is only natural that he should seek them, and endeavour to compensate himself against any probable evil in the future, by as much gratification as he can procure now, and thereby hide from his thoughts the solemn truths of an approaching judgment; but it is a marvellous thing, and must make angels wonder, to see the heirs apparent to a throne of glory, the possessors of the title-deeds of the incorruptible and unfading inheritance, lowering themselves to the position of a worldling, and making it their chief object to get as much as they can here, forgetful of the "things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," and that "glory that is about to be revealed."

May it, by God's grace, not be so with us.

But, *secondly, the heavenly citizen gets protection*; property hereafter, protection now; and that is no mean thing for weak and helpless pilgrims, surrounded by enemies, by those men who love not God, and therefore love not His people, and by the "wicked spirits in heavenly places," of Eph. vi. 12 (margin), who are continually assaulting them in their heavenward journey.

As earthly citizenship confers a right to the protec-

tion of an earthly state, so does heavenly citizenship bring with it a right to the protection of Heaven.

Roman citizenship was no trifling benefit to Paul when in trouble (Acts xxii. 26). An Englishman may claim the protection of England's fleets and England's soldiers wherever he may be.

The child of God has a nobler citizenship, and a mightier protection. Who are your protectors?—the angels of God "that excel in strength," they are "sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. i. 14). "He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways" (Ps. xci. 11). Like Elisha in Dothan, though there be "a great host" compassing you, yet there are also "horses and chariots of fire round about" you too (2 Kings vi. 14, 17).

But you have more than the angels of God. *He Himself* is your "strong habitation whereunto" you may "continually resort" (Ps. lxxi. 3). The heart of love that gave Jesus to die for your sins, still beats tenderly. He says, "I will be with him in trouble." The eye of the Bridegroom watches carefully over the meanest one that forms part of the bride which He purchased from death, sin, and destruction, by His own blood.

"The everlasting arms" are underneath you. He says, "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of Mine eye." And He who said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth," adds, "I will never leave you, nor forsake you." Oh, what security is yours! "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5), whom need you fear? You are invulnerable, and may say with David, "I will not fear what man shall do unto me," for "the angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that

fear Him, and delivereth them " (Ps. xxxiv. 7), and God Himself is " your help and your shield."

Earthly protection may be unable to reach you everywhere, but prison doors (Acts xii.) are not too mighty for God's messengers, and the " ends of the earth " are not too far for His arm (Ps. cxxxix. 9, 10).

The whale's belly, the lions' den, the fiery furnace, the throng and business of Babylon, or the presence chamber of Cæsar, are all alike to Him who has said, " I am with you always."

Therefore be strong and very courageous ; wherever duty calls you, boldly go. You need fear no evil ; the persecution of the openly ungodly, or the ridicule of decent and silver-slippered religionists, need not terrify you. Confess *His* name boldly, lead the forlorn-hopes of *His* battles, stand out as a witness for *Jesus* in the midst of an ungodly world, seek out the perishing, brave the dangers. No evil can or shall befall you, for God is on your side. Clad in His armour, you are secure ; fighting under His banner, the victory is yours, for Christ is " the Captain " of your " salvation."

There may be one who says, " Ah, I am not one of those soldiers. I fought once, I held the sword and shield, and walked in the way of conflict and victory, but I grew cold and careless. I ceased to fight, I wandered far away ; I cannot get back, all is dark, the light has faded away. I shall one day perish by the hand of the enemy."

Cheer up, poor backslider ; *you* have grown cold, but *Jesus has not*. You are weak, but He is mighty. You have wandered, but He has followed you. Just as when Christian and his companion, like you, had turned away through By-path Meadow, and wandered

carelessly on, till they found themselves in the dungeons of Doubting Castle, and in the grasp of Giant Despair, and yet found there a key that unlocked every gate and set them free again, even the key of promise; so are there for you some precious promises of protection that shall strengthen your fainting heart, and raise your waning faith. Has Jesus changed? "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. iii. 6).

Has He broken His promise? "I will never leave you, nor forsake you!"

You have changed, *you* have wandered, and He has permitted you, in your experience, to suffer the consequences of your carelessness and folly, and now you are in trouble.

But look at Him, He is still as nigh, still as loving, still as mighty; trust in Him. Though *you* may remember your wretched backsliding, *He* will not, and His strong hand will guide your feet once more into the way of peace. The protection of Heaven is still yours, and the throne of grace is still nigh, that you may come and get "strength to help in time of need."

Lastly, Let us consider *what are the responsibilities of the heavenly citizen!* For we must never forget that just as earthly citizenship brings responsibilities with it as well as privileges, so does the heavenly, and those responsibilities no slight ones. What are they? First, *obedience to the King, subjection to His laws*. Remember, that if you own Christ as your Saviour, you must also own Him as your Lord. He has delivered you by His death from the slavery of sin, and the service of the god of this world; but what for?—to "serve the living God." "Ye *were* the servants of sin," but "being made free from sin,

ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. vi. 17, 18).

This is no hard bondage, dear friends. Christ is not "an austere man," as enemies and false servants would make Him out to be. His service is perfect freedom. The believer can say :

"In a service which Thy will appoints
There are no bonds for me,
For my inmost heart is taught the truth
That makes Thy children free ;
And a life of self-renouncing love
Is a *life of liberty!*"

Yes, the Christian can say with David (Ps. cxix. 32), "I will *run* the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart."

Jesus has given the heavenly citizens laws for their guidance—His blessed word. "Laws from heaven for life on earth," as one has called them, a collection of such statutes as no earthly state ever possessed, —nothing vague about them, though unintelligible for those who know not Him that wrote the book. To those who in sincerity say, "Show me Thy way, O Lord, teach me Thy truth," and have learnt to come to the "Counsellor" for teaching and guidance, all is clear and plain. For every difficulty there is direction, for every trial a promise. "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple" (Ps. xix. 7).

To this law, dear friends, let us be obedient, who believe that our names are enrolled amongst those that are "written in heaven."

Oh, what blessings are there not promised to simple, unhesitating obedience to His laws—not

part of them, but *all*; not only to what we like naturally, but to all that He commands, for "*every word of God is pure!*" And let us remember, that amongst the parting words of Jesus to His disciples were these, which ought ever to ring in our ears, "*If a man love Me, he will keep My words*" (John xiv. 23).

Yes, obedience is the citizen's first duty, and without that it is vain to talk of love and faith. The path of obedience may be, will be often hard to flesh and blood, but "the way of the Lord is strength to the upright"; and He never requires obedience where He does not promise strength to obey. It is the path of peace, of joy, of blessing, for that word stands true for ever, "Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments" (Ps. cxii. 1). "In the keeping of them there is great reward" (Ps. xix. 11).

Again, *a citizen is responsible for the welfare and peace of his fellow-citizens*. And so are we. Who are our fellow-citizens? *All believers in Jesus*. Every child of God throughout the world, whatever his colour, name, age, rank, or sect. If they have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, if the Spirit of God has renewed them unto eternal life, they are our brethren, and heirs with us of the glory of God.

Oh, dear friends, how narrow our minds are apt to get! If people don't see exactly as we do, or walk according to our rules, if their views on some points are a little different (I mean lesser points), if their church system differs a little from ours, how ready we are to turn them the cold shoulder and shun them! But are they not our brethren? Has not one Father received them and us? Is not the same precious blood sprinkled on us both? Is not our property

in glory one and the same? Then we are to "love as brethren" here. We are to be "pitiful" and "courteous." We are to "seek every man another's wealth." We are "every one of us to please his neighbour for his good to edification" (Rom. xv. 2), and to "receive one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God."

We are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God"; and if my fellow-citizen happens to live in Church of England Street, or Wesleyan Street, or Independent Street, or Baptist Square, or Brethren's Row, I am still to love him, and seek his welfare, and to have communion with him, on the one glorious and common ground that "the blood of the Lamb is the union of the saints." And we cannot shirk this great duty of seeking the welfare, spiritual and temporal, of our fellow-citizens without injury to our own souls, and damage to the cause of Christ.

God has given to each of us power for some little brotherly service, and some sphere to exercise it in, however small. We all have need one of another, the hand of the foot, and the foot of the hand; and if one refuses to do his share, the whole body suffers loss, and that individual member, for want of proper exercise, grows weak and stunted.

The Master, in His various members, has need of each one of us. May He give us grace to see our responsibility in this matter more and more, and to remember that in serving one another we serve the Lord Christ.

Lastly (though these are but a few of the responsibilities), *the citizen is bound to uphold and increase, where he can, the honour and glory of His King.*

This can be done in two ways. First, by a bold

and uncompromising confession of our citizenship, and of Him whose Name you bear.

Wherever an Englishman goes he is not ashamed to confess his country. And should a sinner saved by grace be ashamed to own the country which God has made him a citizen of?

Whenever Christian and Hopeful were asked by any one whither they were going, they were able to answer without hesitation, "To the Celestial City." And should we be different? Remember, there is no presumption or pride in boldly confessing that you are a Christian. *You* did not make yourself one, there is nothing to boast of; *God* made you a citizen of glory, and wrote your name in the Lamb's Book of Life, not you.

When Jesus, in Mark v., told the madman whom He had just healed to confess Him as the One who had made such a change in him, He said, "Tell them" (not what great things thou has done for me, but) "what great things *the Lord* hath done for *thee*, and hath had compassion on thee."

Confession of Christ as your Lord honours Him, and this is done as much by your life as by your lip, if not more. Oh, dear friends, be not ashamed of Jesus! He was not ashamed of you: "He endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Your shame cannot ever equal His. A little laughter, or mockery, is probably the most you will be called upon to bear. Bear it for Him. You owe Him everything. He only asks in return, that you should bear witness for Him, by word and deed, in a world, the citizens of which still say, "We will not have this man to reign over us"; "We have no king but Cæsar." Bear your testimony to Jesus as the rightful Lord of all,

though you be the only one in the room, or the only one in the world. And when He comes again, He will confess you before His Father which is in heaven.

Remember whose you are, and disgrace not Him whose name you bear, and the country to which you belong, by a worldly, inconsistent walk. "Mind not earthly things," but "walk worthy of Him who **has** called you to His kingdom and glory."

Secondly, you can increase His glory by adding to the number of His subjects; "for in the multitude of the people is the king's honour" (Prov. xiv. 28).

As Moses said to Hobab (Num. x. 29), so say you to those whose feet are yet in the broad road, "We are journeying to the place which the Lord has said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

Don't be content with travelling alone. "He that winneth souls is wise." How few are your Master's subjects! Can you not add to their number? Don't you know of *one*, whom by loving entreaty, by consistent example, and by persevering prayer to God, you can lead to Jesus? Oh, are there not *many* within reach of that influence which God has given you, who are, as yet, only citizens of the world, and who have heard even but little of the glories of that kingdom towards which you are hastening? Can you not tell them of the grace, the love, the power of Jesus? Can you not tell them how He sought, and found *you*, when nothing but a child of wrath, "even as others," and how He brought you to Himself, and saved you with an everlasting salvation?

Thus might the number of His people be increased, thus would that day be hastened on, when the last

one being added to that multitude which no one can number, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and *shall be satisfied.*"

Oh, what unspeakable joy will it be then to see amid that happy, glorious throng around the Saviour's throne, *one*, even only *one soul*, radiant with all the bliss and glory of His presence, which but for the message of love and pardon, conveyed to it by your lips, would, humanly speaking, have been banished to the *woes* and darkness of an everlasting hell! Who can tell the joy of that moment, of that eternity! Let us then seek, beloved brethren and sisters in Jesus, thus to increase the glory and honour of our Lord and Saviour. Time is short! Souls are precious! Jesus is mighty to save, and able to keep those whom He saves!

May He help us during this "little while" so to bear witness, by our words and works, to the reality of our heavenly citizenship, and of His grace who made us heirs of such a kingdom, that many may be led to Him who invites *all* and who casts out *none that come.*

And now, but one word more; are we *all* citizens of heaven? Are we all in that narrow way, at the end of which the glories of that celestial city shine so brightly?

Friends, whither are you bound? An *eternal* habitation is before you. Which is yours to be? Shall you be "for ever with the Lord," or for ever with the devil and his angels? You say, "I hope to be saved." Are you yet in the narrow way? If not, your hope of being saved is about as good a one as the devil's. There is *no hope out of Christ*, and He says, "*I am the way.*" Are you *in Christ*? I don't ask what you *hope* to be, but what you are now

to-day. Whom do you serve? God, or the god of this world? Jesus Christ, or self?

Let me speak to those who know that, as far as regards themselves, they are not yet in the way to glory, not yet citizens of heaven: because not yet born again of the Spirit.

It is my privilege and duty to tell you the good news: lay hold of it as good news for *yourself*. You may be saved to-night. You may enter in at the gate at the head of the way to-night. You may be born again to-night!

Salvation is accomplished. Jesus has died for your sins. And God offers to you a free salvation to-night, the moment you trust in that finished sacrifice, which He has accepted for you. You have nothing to do. Jesus has done all that had to be done: and said, "*It is finished.*" Be satisfied with that, and God is then satisfied with you. Trust in Jesus as your Substitute and Saviour, and God accepts you, and pardons you for His sake.

The door is open, and we are to compel you to come in. The message is, "*Yet there is room.*" You may come *as you are*, for "all things are ready." Oh, come! Come as that valiant man who, bursting through the throngs of enemies, went boldly up to the door, and said, "Set my name down"; or come as poor Mercy came, falteringly and tremblingly, almost afraid to knock, but come *as you are*.

"If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all,
Not the righteous,
Sinners Jesus came to call."

And He calls you now. Will you refuse? Will you push back that pierced hand, which, bearing the

mark of sin's punishment borne once and for ever, is still stretched out towards you? Will you refuse that pleading look, those beseeching words of the loving Jesus?

It is true of Him still, "This man receiveth *sinners*." Come to Him as a sinner; He cannot, will not cast you out. He will wash your guilty soul from all your sins in His own blood. He will write your name down amongst the number of His happy people. He will give you the earnest of your heavenly inheritance, the Holy Ghost. And thus you will be able to say with us to-night,

"OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN."

THE EXPECTATION OF THE HEAVENLY CITIZEN

PHILIPPIANS iii. 20

“For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

LET us first think of *the expectation of the heavenly citizen—whence it is.*

The sinner that has believed in Jesus is journeying to glory; his position is like that of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt; they were not as yet come to the good land, but they were journeying to it: and, therefore, you find that the Israelites “pitched their tents” here and there, that they were always moving. There is a whole chapter filled with just the names of places where they pitched their tents, and from which they went on again. Such is the Christian’s position. He is always journeying; he is like Abraham, who did not build a house in the land of promise, but dwelt in tents, and thus “confessed” that he was a “pilgrim and a stranger.” And since the believing sinner, the child of God, is a pilgrim, he has to look for something still; he has not got home yet; he is looking homeward, and all his expectation is from heaven.

And herein the child of God, the believer, stands in marked contrast with the child of the world, the unbeliever. It is very interesting to see the different lines of conduct and the different language of the two. In Ps. iv. 6 it is written, “There be many that say,

Who will show us any good ? ” But David, the man of God, says, “ Lord, lift *Thou* up the light of Thy countenance upon us.” *His* expectation was from heaven ; whilst the children of the world, who were saying, “ Who will show us any good ? ” were, in his day, exactly like what Paul found the Athenians to be (Acts xvii.), who spent their time in nothing else but in telling or hearing “ *some new thing.* ” They were always seeking something. Why ? Because they had not got *satisfaction in God*. The expectation of the child of the world is from the world, and there is no wonder ; he does not know any better.

How remarkably you find the conduct and character of the children of the world brought out in Gen. iv. ! There you find that after Abel was slain, Cain was sent out from the presence of the Lord, and all that he does is to try and make himself as happy and comfortable as he can in the world. He builds a city (ver. 17), and calls it after the name of his son. (If you remember, that is one of the marks of the children of the world which is given in Ps. xlix. “ They call their lands after their own name ” ; as much as to say, “ I shall live here for ever ; I will make myself happy and comfortable ; I will build a city, and call it after my name or my son’s name.”) That is what Cain did. He “ built a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch.” And then there comes a numerous race from Cain, and they make themselves happy here ; and you find, in verse 21, that they “ handled the harp and the organ ” ; and in the next verse, that they were “ artificers in brass and iron,” and in everything that makes the world what it is, and they seemed content with it ; but they were “ without God in the world.”

There is an extremely interesting verse in Job, which

shows how this is applied as setting forth the character of the *ungodly*, because the ungodly are those that are *without God*—those who are content to be without God. In Job xxi. 11, we read, “They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ” (exactly what Cain and his descendants did), “they spent their days in wealth” (or ‘mirth,’ marg.), “and in a moment go down to the grave. *Therefore they say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways.*” And if you look at the next chapter, you find that this language is especially said by God to have been the language of those who perished in the Flood. In verse 15 He says, “Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood; *which said unto God, Depart from us?*”

These were the people whose expectations were from the world, and they are for ever a standing warning to the people of the world in all generations. For you find that Jude, speaking of the men of the world, says that the ungodly men of the last days go “*in the way of Cain.*” So that there is nothing new under the sun. The way of the world now is the same as then.

You find in the parable of Luke xii. 2 the description of a man whose expectation is not from heaven, but from the earth. He is a rich man who builds his houses and barns, and says (ver. 19), “I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.” Such is the character of the people of the world. All of us who are children of the world “mind earthly things.” It is in vain, we do not get satisfaction;

we go on and on ; no sooner is one vessel broken, and we find it empty, than we take up another ; if one treasure is not enough to satisfy, we think, in our folly, that something else is. It is in vain that the preacher in Ecclesiastes says, " There is nothing new under the sun." We think there *is*. We think that this will please or that will satisfy us ; or that this will give us the amusement, or that the happiness we want. All of us who have been converted by the grace of God remember what we sought after. We were seeking something we did not get ; and that something apart from God.

But the child of God is not so. Hence he says, "*We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ ;* He is a citizen of heaven. ' Our citizenship is in heaven,' from whence, ' Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.' " There is the difference. The child of God has been taught by the Holy Ghost that the things of this world will never satisfy his soul ; that the fashion of this world passeth away. We have learned by the grace of God to look at things in the light of God, to see what they really are ; what all the gains and amusements and comforts of this world are. We have learned to see the world, as God sees it, as " lying in wickedness." There is a great black pall lying over the world that has crucified Christ ; the blood of the Son of God calls for vengeance, and the man of God sees that the world is under the curse, and that judgment is coming upon it ; and so he says, I must look elsewhere, and he looks *up*—"*from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Now is this our standing, dear friends ? Is this our character ? Can we say we no longer expect blessing, or comfort, or happiness in any great measure

from the things of earth? Mind, I do not say we are not to *use* the things of earth, because the Word of God says distinctly that we are. In 1 Tim. iv. 3, we read that God hath created the things of earth to be received *with thanksgiving* of them which believe and know the truth. I am not to shut myself up in a monastery or convent because the world is bad. No, the Lord says we are to use those things, as not abusing them, "for every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, *if it be received with thanksgiving.*" The characteristic of the world is, that they do not receive the things of God with thanksgiving; but the child of God is to receive them in that way, for they are sanctified and made fit for his use, set apart by God for him, by the Word of God and prayer.

Now, I say, is this standing ours? Is our walk that of those whose expectation is *from heaven*, who have learned that this world can *never* satisfy, and who cease to look for satisfaction from it; who say, "So long as God keeps me here, I will use it for Him; I will take the things He gives me and bless Him for them, but I am not to look for abiding peace, or solid comfort, or satisfaction, or joy, from the things that I get here. I must have something from above."

Is that what we are saying? Is our walk—I put it to you and to myself—is our walk like that of Abraham, who dwelt in the tent, who did not go down into the plains of Sodom and mingle there with the men of the world, who were living in sin, and partake of their dainties?

You remember how, in Gen. xiv., we read that when his nephew Lot got into trouble, he armed his servants and domestics, and went down and delivered his poor, foolish, worldly nephew out of the hands of his

enemies, and then the world came to Abraham in the shape of the king of Sodom, and offered him its treasures. Abraham would not touch them. "I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the possessor of heaven and earth, that I will not take from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, lest thou shouldst say, I have made Abram rich." He would not have anything to do with Sodom—why? He had been living up in heaven. He had got a sight of glory. He had embraced the promise of God, and he did not want these things, either from a thread to a shoe-latchet. They could not do him any good. Here, then, was a man whose expectation was from heaven.

On the other hand, there was Lot. He tried to make his nest on earth a comfortable one. Notwithstanding the condition of the men of Sodom, of whom we read they were "wicked and sinners exceedingly before the Lord," Lot has no objection—or, if he had, he overlooked it—to live with them. He *may* have had qualms of conscience about it, and have said, "No, I will not go down here to this city." But the place was too well watered and attractive; so Lot, if he has scruples, drowns them: if he has convictions, he crushes them; if he has qualms of conscience, he stifles them. Have we ever done that?

He goes down to Sodom because he wishes to be happy and comfortable; but the Lord in mercy to His child—for He was His child—sends the angel to save him from destruction. Oh, what a pain it was to Lot to go out of Sodom! How he lingers, how he prays for a little mercy to linger there! Here was a man—a Christian, one may say—one who was called by the apostle, speaking by the Holy Ghost, a *righteous* man, and yet his expectation was not from

heaven, but from Sodom. What an awful picture ! How nearly he was destroyed in the fire of Sodom !

Do not let us think that these are merely interesting pictures. Which are you ? Which am I ? Are we, like Abraham, getting our satisfaction, comfort, and joy from God ; or are we saying, " No, this is my resting-place ; I am happy, I am going to glory, but I do not want it yet ; I had rather have all these things, and though the world is a sinful world, I am so fond of it that I cannot leave this or that thing, I am too fond of it ? "

Oh, may God just teach us where we stand ! What an unhappy life is the one, and what a happy life is the other, because the separation must come, and it is often a bitter one. Oh, dear friends, if you want to enjoy the presence of God, walk closely with Him. Do not be like Lot, but pray that you may have the faith of Abraham, who lived to the God of glory, and judged all other things as dross, for the " excellency of the knowledge of Him."

But now, *what is the expectation of the heavenly citizen ?* What does he look for ?

There are many blessed things, but what is the main thing that the child of God looks for ? Is it the heavenly inheritance that is " incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away " ? Yes. Is it the " crown of glory " ? Yes, it is. Is it " the rest " of God's people ? Yes, thank God we look for that. Is it the home, is it the golden streets ? Yes, all that ; ay, and ten thousand times ten thousand more, for " eye hath not seen, not ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things that God hath prepared for them that love him " (or, " that *wait* for Him," Isa. lxiv. 4). But that alone is not what we look for in heaven. If the bride comes

home, she does not care for the house, or land, or plate, or jewels, if the bridegroom is not there. And so here; it is not "from whence also we look for *glory*," but "whence also we look for THE SAVIOUR, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST." As the hymn says:

"The bride eyes not her garments, but her dear bridegroom's face;

I will not gaze on glory, but on my King of grace,
Not on the crown He giveth, but on His pierced hand;
THE LAMB *is all the glory* of Emmanuel's land."

That is what the Christian waits for. Oh, dear Christian friends, how little do we have our hearts and thoughts centred in Him! It seems as if this verse described somebody else than ourselves. Yet it *is* the characteristic of the child of God, that he looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now it seems here as if the apostle were like a herald. You know when great men are buried, the herald stands at the tomb and calls out all the names, the rank, and the titles of the mighty dead. And when some great king or conqueror comes into a place, the herald goes before with a trumpet, and calls out all his names.

So St. Paul here is like a herald. He is heralding the coming King. He gives Him all His titles, the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; and he says we look for Him, the Anointed of God; the Messiah; Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins? Jesus, the King of kings, the Lord of lords; Jesus, the Saviour of the world.

We look for Him *as a Saviour*. The end of the chapter will show us *how* we look for Him as a Saviour, but there is the fact specified. It was thus, if you look to 1 Thess. i. 10, that the early Thessalonian Christians looked for Jesus. We are told there of

their conversion and of their service of God, and not only that they had turned from idols to serve the living and the true God, but also that they were waiting "for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even *Jesus, who delivered us* from the wrath to come."

That is the great name. Is not that, dear friends, the name that touches, or ought to touch, every one of our hearts? If there is no other name that comes home to our hearts, that one ought—*the Saviour*, for it reminds us we are lost by nature. It reminds us of the depth and ruin in which you and I lay; that we needed such a Saviour as the Lord Jesus Christ; that it needed such a sacrifice as His precious blood to save us.

It tells us of all He has done. It tells us of the love of God, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." It tells us of all this. Jesus is the Saviour, for "He shall save His people from their sins." It tells us of what He *has* saved us from; by bearing the penalty Himself, "in His own body on the tree."

It tells us of what He *is saving* us from—our daily sins, our daily faults, our daily shortcomings, our daily burdens, and griefs, and cares. It tells us of what He *will* save us from—this body of sin and death. It is for this Saviour that the Christian looks. It is not, you see, for the blessed reward, so much as for HIM that we look. "From whence also we look for the Saviour."

Now, the remarkable thing about this is, that we have never seen the Saviour with the outward eye, and yet we love Him. That is the characteristic of Christians, they love Christ. When we look at our own love, it is very worthless and feeble; and yet

it is scripturally true, that "we love Him, because He first loved us." We love Him, whom we have never seen with the outward eyes. St. Peter says, "Whom, having not seen, ye love."

But yet we know Him. We know Jesus. We have seen a picture of Jesus; here it is, in the Word of God. We, who by grace are citizens of heaven, have gazed upon Jesus Christ; and if we had not we should not have had life, for it is only by looking unto Him that we live. Yes, dear friends, we have looked at Him as He walked this earth, bearing our infirmities and taking our sicknesses, "the Man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs." We have read page after page, and verse after verse, and watched the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, as He went along through the wilderness of this world, despised, rejected, cast out; yet always doing good, always blessing, always full of love and power to save—the lovely, the perfect, the spotless One. We have looked on that picture, and therefore we know Him. His features are impressed upon our hearts.

We have seen Jesus in that way, and we have looked at Jesus as He has borne our sins. We have seen Him going up the hill of Calvary, bearing the cross, lifted up on the cross, made a curse for us, put between heaven and earth, accursed of God, forsaken of man. We have seen Jesus living; we have seen Jesus dying, giving Himself for our sins. We know it. We have seen that blessed picture, and it remains upon our hearts. We know Jesus Christ as the Saviour. Oh, what a glorious thing to know Christ! Why? It is life eternal. If the Christian does not know any one else, he knows Christ.

You remember what was said of Bishop Beveridge when he was dying. His senses were almost gone,

EXPECTATION OF HEAVENLY CITIZEN III

but his friends came to him, and they mentioned his children's names. They said, "Do you know your children's names?" No, he did not know them. They mentioned his wife's name. No, he did not know it. They then said, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" "*Oh yes,*" he said, "*I have known Him for forty years.*" There was a man who had seen the picture, who had gazed upon Christ; and though his senses were fading, though the outward man was perishing, the inward man was renewed. He was soon going to open his eyes, and to see Him whom his soul loved.

Dear friends, are you Christ's? If you are, you know Christ. If you do not know Christ, you are not His. Is your eye resting upon Him as the well-beloved Son of God! Oh then, thank God! That is a sight worth everything else. "Look unto ME," He says, "and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth."

"From whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." That is the expectation, that is the hope. It runs all through the New Testament, but we cannot go into that now. You know the passages. Epistle after epistle is full of them—how the Christians were all waiting for Jesus because their hearts were fixed on him. Not that it was with them a matter of dates, and times, and seasons; but they looked for Him. They did not know when He would come, but they knew He had said, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself." They knew that the angels had said, "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go"; and they believed the Word of God, and they looked for Him. Their expectation was from Him; because this world

was crucified to them, and their only blessing could come from His presence.

And now just a word or two about *the attitude of the Christian in looking for Jesus*, and that takes us back a little to the first point, where it says, we look for Jesus to come from heaven. As I said, the citizen of heaven is not *in* heaven; he journeys *towards* heaven, but he has One in heaven who is his representative. As countries have an ambassador to represent them, so Jesus has gone as the representative of His people into the heavenly courts. We are told in the 6th chapter of Hebrews that He has gone there as their "*forerunner*." I think I explained that to many who were here the other day. It may be understood in several senses, but one which, to my mind, is very beautiful is this: The forerunner of a caravan in Eastern lands is the one that runs out before, and comes to the large inn where the company is to stop for the night, and writes up the name of each person over the door, and so when they come, their place is ready. *Jesus is the forerunner*. He has gone into heaven as our forerunner. He says, "I go to prepare a place for you." What a blessed thought! When I get there I shall find a place among the many mansions; Jesus has gone to prepare it; it will be my home; I will be happy, for Jesus will be there.

Again, Jesus is in heaven as our High Priest and Saviour; He is there *now*. We are told in Heb. ix. 24 that He has "not entered into the holy place made with hands, which is the figure of the true: but into heaven itself, *now to appear in the presence of God for us*." We are not there, but He is. You and I, if believers, are members of His body, but the Head, the Life is there, and He is doing what we can-

not do—helping us from daily sin, bearing us now upon His heart before God the Father. He is offering sweet incense continually. That is a beautiful passage in Ex. xxx., where we are told that Aaron the high priest was to go before the mercy-seat where God said He would meet with him; and was to “burn thereon” (that is, upon the altar) “sweet incense every morning; when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at evening, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense.” You can never see any cessation of this sweet incense before God upon the altar. That was Aaron’s business. He was the high priest. Now that is what Jesus is doing. “He hath given Himself,” we read in the 5th chapter of Ephesians, “an offering to God, for a *sweet smelling savour*”; and God—who we read in the 8th chapter of Genesis, “smelled the sweet savour, and said, I will no more curse the earth again for man’s sake”—looks on it again, and says, “I will no more curse.” That sweet incense always before God the Father is His own well-beloved Son; and whoever stands in Him, in that sweet cloud of incense, will never be judged at the last day.

But Jesus will not always be in that place. He is coming out to bless the people. If you look at the 1st chapter of Luke you will find an illustration of what the priest did, and what the people did. Speaking of the priest Zacharias, Luke says (chap. i. ver. 9), that, “according to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.” That is what the priest did; but what did the people do? “And the whole multitude of the people were praying without.” You see they were not in the holy place. The citizens are not in heaven. They were praying without at

the time of incense. In the 21st verse you find that the people waited for Zacharias. Why? He was to come out and bless them. "*Whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*" He is the Priest. He is offering incense morning and evening perpetually. But He is coming out. "I will come again and receive you unto Myself." He is coming out of the temple to bless the people.

He is coming as Isaac did, as we read in Gen. xxiv. When Rebecca the bride was being brought home, Isaac was walking in the fields to meet her and take her home. That is what Jesus is coming for. "The Lord shall come, and shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we who are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." "*Whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

Dear friends, let us pray that our attitude may be that of the people who waited for the priest to come out and bless them, and let us remember that this is not merely having our eyes looking up to the clouds. This is the very thing the angels rebuked the disciples for. "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." But we are not to have our eyes just fixed upon heaven, dreaming, star-gazing; our business is on earth, but our *hearts* are to be waiting for Him. Oh, let us pray for that—to have our hearts resting in such peace, so aloof from the world, so fixed upon Jesus, that our attitude of soul may be such, that we may be able to say, morning, noon, and night,

“ From whence we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Now, dear friends, is this our hope? Can we all say we are looking? Oh, if some of you cannot—if some of you do not know what it is to be waiting for Jesus, because still conscious of sin, still having guilt on your heart—thanks be to God these very words may comfort you, may lead you on to peace. For what do they tell of, but of a Saviour, the very one you want, a Saviour who can save His people from their sins, one who has died that He might save, one who lives that He might save, and who is able to save *you*.

Oh, will you look to Him? You will have to look to Him, for “ behold, He cometh with clouds, and *every eye shall see Him.*” Dear friends, already the midnight cry may be sounding, “ Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.” Are you going out? Are you going to meet Jesus? How? As towards a friend? As towards the one *you know, have seen, and trusted in?* As towards the one whose blood is more precious to you than ten thousands of gold and silver? Oh, I beseech you now, even this night, before that cry is heard in the distinctness with which it will be heard when, as it seems from that passage, there will be no more buying, when those that are awakened, and have to go to buy, are shut out, *now, before the door is shut, look to the Saviour.*

He died that you might live—that *there might be pardon from a just God for unjust sinners like you and me.* He says, “ Look unto Me, all the end of the earth, and be ye saved.” For He is a Saviour, a precious Saviour, a mighty Saviour. *He has saved us who know Him. He can save you. He will save you, if you will only trust Him to do it.*

THE GLORIOUS TRANSFORMATION

PHILIPPIANS iii. 18-21

“ For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ : whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ : who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

WE have seen that the apostle has here been contrasting two different classes and characters — those who mind earthly things, and those who mind heavenly things. Those who mind earthly things are not those who look for the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The coming of Jesus (or, if Jesus come not before he die, death) would be the annihilation, the end of all the hopes and expectations of the man whose heart, and whose interests, and whose affections, are fixed upon the things of earth and time. He is not looking for Christ.

The most awful thing that can happen to any one of us, who is not looking for Jesus, will be His appearing ; for it is “ sudden destruction,” sudden and everlasting destruction. But the apostle says, “ We are not minding these earthly things, we are minding heavenly things, for our citizenship is in

heaven; we are looking for the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"; as much as to say, earthly things have lost their charm for us who believe in Jesus. We have seen the world in the light of God as it really is declared to be—a "present *evil* world." We did not think so once; but the light of God has shone upon us, our hearts have been enlightened by the Holy Ghost and His teaching, and we see the world in quite a different aspect from that in which we once saw it. The Cross of Christ has shown us what the world really is. Its worst deed has revealed its true character, and we have seen the world casting out the Son of God, saying, "We will have nothing more to do with Him"; like Joseph's brethren, who, when they had cast him into the pit, sat eating and drinking, and making themselves happy and comfortable, after they had, as they thought, got rid of the troublesome one, and put him out of the way. That is what this world has done. It is what you and I did as long as we belonged to this world. We all had our share in it, for by saying in our hearts, "We will not have this man to reign over us," we set our hand and seal to the deed of Romans and Jews in that day, and chose Barabbas the murderer, rather than Christ the Saviour.

But now, thanks be unto God, who has had mercy upon us, we can say we no longer mind earthly things. "Our citizenship is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." That is the main characteristic of a Christian. He is waiting for Jesus. The word which is here translated, "look," is only used in five or six other places in the New Testament, and only in one other place is it called "look"; it is always "wait," earnestly waiting. You have it in Rom. viii., "The earnest expectation of the creature *waiteth* for the manifestation of the

sons of God." It is not a mere momentary glance upward, but it is the attitude of a soul *waiting* for Christ; and that is, I trust, dear friends, the attitude of every real believer in Jesus; he is "waiting for the Son of God from heaven." Our eyes are straining, and our ears are hearkening, and our hearts are longing to catch the first sight and sound of that appearing of Jesus Christ, and our hearts often beat, don't they? when we think that the signs of the times are showing that our "redemption draweth nigh." Thus the believer is *waiting for Jesus*.

We have looked at the place where Jesus is; He is to come out of the holy place within the veil, where He is now appearing in the presence of God for us who are on earth. We are waiting, as the people waited outside the temple, to see the priest come out; we wait to see our High Priest come out in His "garments of glory and beauty," to fulfil His word, "I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

But this passage speaks of two classes; and it is very interesting, I think, to see the contrast drawn between the two so distinctly. Each mark of the character of the ungodly seems to have its counterpart, its opposite mark in the character of the believer. In the 18th verse they are said to be "the *enemies* of the Cross of Christ." In the 20th verse we are told, "our citizenship is in heaven"; therefore, we are not "enemies, but *friends*." Of them it is said, "Whose end is *destruction*," but the other verses show us that the end of the believer is *salvation*, for he is waiting for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. We are told that they make a god of their belly, or their body. The hope of the believer is to be delivered from his body as it now is; he is not making a god

of it, at least he ought not to be doing so. We are told that *their glory* is in their shame. *Our glory* is in being made like unto Christ in His glory. We are told that they mind "*earthly things*," while believers mind "*heavenly things*." Thus you see there are the two opposite sides very clearly marked out by the Spirit of God.

Now which, dear friends, do you and I belong to? You see it does not speak of a middle class, but only two. Oh, before I go on to speak of what Jesus will do when He comes again (which will be our subject for to-night), do let me ask you earnestly to settle that question, which class are you of? Are you minding "*earthly things*," and therefore is your end "*destruction*"? Or are you minding *heavenly things*, and therefore is your end to be conformed to the image of Jesus? If Christ were to come now, that question would be settled *for* you. But you may settle it. You may learn your true position; you need have no uncertainty about it at all. Men may persuade you that it is wrong to be sure, and wrong to be certain, but the Word of God never says so; it speaks distinctly. Each one of us in these rooms to-night is either bound for glory, having entered in at the strait gate, into the narrow way which leadeth unto eternal life; or we are in the broad road that leadeth to destruction.

Be not deceived. Get certainty about the matter whatever you may not get; for the time is coming when you would give anything in the world to have made certain of life, or death, while you had the opportunity. Do not be content, dear friends, with just coming here on Monday evenings, or going elsewhere on Sundays, to hear what you think to be the truth; but remember this, God's truth is meant to

have an effect upon your souls, and if you leave this room to-night unconverted, unsaved, you have defeated so far the object for which God's truth is proclaimed to your soul. You have distinctly and deliberately said "No"; though you may not in words, yet in deeds you have said, "This truth shall not have an effect upon my soul."

We shall look at some wonderful things to-night, things which some may think not very practical. But all God's truth is practical. It is our fault if it is not. Not a word, not the smallest word, is written by God in this Bible, which is not meant to have a practical effect upon us. Oh, may God bless His word! Lift up your hearts. God answers prayer; He has answered prayer. Do beseech Him, that as I try in His name to open up the meaning of these words, He may bless it to our souls with the dew of heaven, that believers may be comforted and strengthened, and that some souls may be added to that number to-night, who are able to say, "Our citizenship is in heaven"—who can take up this 21st verse as that which belongs to them (for this 21st verse is the property of the believing soul, the soul which is in Jesus)—"who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

Now we can look first at what our *present condition* is, and then at what our *future condition* will be.

"*Who shall change our vile body.*" That is what the Lord God says. But our body is not a "vile body" in one sense. When God made man, He made him in His own image; that was not a "vile" image, it was a very glorious image, and God looked upon it, and saw that it was "very good."

It may be, that at the time this translation of the Bible was made, the word "vile" had not exactly the same sense that we get from it now. At the present day the word "vile" means something utterly despicable. Well, the body is not "vile" in that sense. If you look at the 139th Psalm, you will find David saying in the 14th verse, "I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvellous are Thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." "My substance was not hid from Thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth." "Fearfully and wonderfully made" is our body. But this verse does not really say that it is a "vile body." As many of us must be aware, the real translation of the words is "the body of our humiliation," "the body of our humbling," in which we are humbled.

Now how is this body, in which you and I are, "a body of humiliation"? I will not dwell long upon that, but only give just two or three thoughts about it.

First, *in its physical aspect* it is so. It was made in the image of God. It was not made to die. But "sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, in that all have sinned." And then it became "a body of humiliation" in its physical aspect, a weak, an unprofitable thing; "the flesh profiteth nothing." First of all it lived nine hundred years; and now it hardly ever reaches ninety. It has got lower and lower in strength and power, and that just shows that it is "a body of humiliation." It is weak in that respect. If you look round in the world, what disease you find, what cripples, what pain, what aches in the body because of its weakness! Physically, then, it is a body of much humiliation. It is a body which we may look upon and say,

"Ah, this is not as it once was; this is the fruit of sin."

Perhaps there are not many of us here who have seen a battlefield, but I have. I remember what it was to look upon heaps of corpses piled one upon the other, in every ghastly shape and form. I saw there "the body of humiliation." We do not often see death in its worst forms. Those we love are soon taken from our sight, and we do not see the body as it really is after death. So then it is "the body of humiliation" in its physical aspect.

But it is also far more "a body of humiliation" in its *moral aspect*. And here it applies specially to the believer. His body seems to be described in Scripture as the seat of sin. We are told that it is "sinful flesh." If you look at the 6th and 7th chapters of Romans, you will see the apostle there specially treats the bodies of believers as that whereby they "*serve sin*" (not excluding the mind, or the moral part of our nature; that is equally depraved, but the body is the instrument by which sin is served).

He is speaking of what believers were, when they were, as he says, "in the flesh," that is, in their former unrenewed state, not "in the spirit." In the 5th verse of the 7th chapter he says, "For when we were in the flesh, the motions [or passions] of sins, which were by the law, did work *in our members*" (that is where they work, in our hands and feet, our eyes, our ears, and every part of us), "to bring forth fruit unto death." Therefore it is a body of humiliation. And if you look in the 6th chapter at the 19th verse, he says, "Ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity." Again in the 12th verse he says, "Let not sin therefore reign in *your mortal body*" (it did reign there, but now he

says, "Let it reign there no more"), "that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin."

Now, the believer is delivered from the *dominion* of sin, but each one of us who has been a believer but for one day, knows that there is sin in the flesh still, and that sin still has great power over its old servant the flesh, and that it continually strives to get again under its power the members wherewith it was once served, and therefore the believer is constantly crying out with the apostle, "Oh, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" He feels it is a burden. It is a body of humbling; and we know how we get humbled day by day, because we carry about with us this body of sin. If you look at the 8th chapter of the Romans and the 23rd verse, the condition of those who have believed in Jesus is described in these words: "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit" (we in whom the Spirit of God dwells), "even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the *redemption of our body*." Our souls are saved, but we wait for the complete salvation, the redemption of the body.

And similarly in 2 Cor. v. 4, where we read, "For we that are in this tabernacle" (that means the flesh, the body), "do groan, being burdened." It is a heavy weight. Not one of us who knows anything of the life of God but must be conscious of this.

Perhaps, in first starting, the joy of the newly-born soul is so great that it does not see this. I remember once, about seven years and a half ago, when I was first brought to a knowledge of the truth in Christ, I used to be so disheartened, because I did

not see my own sinfulness as I wanted to see it, and I used to ask older Christians to pray that I might see it more, and they would say, "Oh, you will see it; God will show you in His time, just as much of it as you can bear." For seven years and a half I have been learning, and some of us have been learning for a much longer time, what it is to have sin still in the flesh, and to be humbled.

You know when the Israelites first came out of Egypt they were full of joy, and they sang unto God and praised Him, but they did not then know the evil of their hearts, and they were led for forty years through the wilderness, that they might know what was in their hearts. As I have often said, God might, if He had chosen, have taken us up to heaven at the moment of our conversion, but He has left us in the flesh, not only, I suppose, that we may have the glorious privilege of doing His work here, but that we may learn our own hearts.

Oh, how often do we find this body a body of humiliation! When we want to pray, when we want to praise, when we want to serve God, we find it to be a body of humiliation. See a marvellous instance of it. When the Lord Jesus Christ has only a few hours to live, He has just told His disciples in some measure what He is going through; and whilst He goes to pray, and in His agony to sweat drops of blood, He only says one word to them, and that is, "Watch," and those three men, though they loved Him, *slept*. *There* was the body; they could not watch with Him one hour. He tells them why, "The spirit truly is willing, but the flesh is weak." It was a *body of humiliation*. Oh, if they could have watched with Him then! How they must have thought of that afterwards! The last hour almost that they

could have been of any comfort to their loving and suffering Saviour, and then they slept! Such was the body of humiliation. And so it is with us now, who have but a little while to deny ourselves, that we may watch with Jesus—it may be an hour of sleep, an hour of comfort, an hour of worldly prosperity and ease, and we sleep over it. I do not mean to say that it excuses the soul, but I do mean to say that we may fairly attribute much of it to this “body of our humiliation.”

Well, dear friends, those of us who have faith long for the time when this body will no longer be a clog, a hindrance, and a dead weight, but when it will be that in which we shall serve God joyfully, freely, and for ever. And for this we pray, “Thy kingdom come.” It is coming. That is what the verse says. “We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who *shall change* the body of our humiliation.” That is what He is going to do. “Jesus,” we can say, “is *my* Saviour.” All of us who have believed in Jesus are able by God’s grace to put that word “my” in. The world talks of “our Saviour.” You very seldom hear, I do not know that I ever heard, a man who does not love Christ say, “*my* Saviour.” They will talk of *our* Saviour, and our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Almighty, and the Providence of God; but “my” Saviour, “the One who loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*,” that is another thing.

Now Jesus is a complete Saviour. He does not save His people in a half and half way, but altogether, body, soul, and spirit. Satan, death, and the grave get no victory over the children of God. “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

The verse which we are considering in the Philippians refers specially to those who are alive and remain ; but it includes, I have no doubt, those who have fallen asleep in Christ, and even in their case the grave shall get no victory. Their bodies shall rise again. Look at 1 Cor. xv. 42, and there you have the description of it—"So also is the resurrection of the dead ; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption : it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory : it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power : it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body." And in the 51st verse—"Behold, I show you a mystery ; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." "We wait for the Saviour, who shall change our vile bodies," "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump ; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and *we shall be changed*. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." Such is the hope set before the children of God ; and in 1 Pet. i. 13 we are told to "hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." We wait for the redemption of the *body*. We have salvation now, but Jesus is coming to perfect and complete the whole thing, and set the bodies of His people free from that which they now feel to be so continually dragging them down to the earth. That is what we look for. We rest upon His word. We have not seen Him yet, but we know as surely as we are alive here that He is coming to do it, because He has said so.

Secondly, let us consider *what our future condition will be*. "He shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory," for that is the real translation of the words.

Now, to make believers like Christ is God's great purpose. He makes them *spiritually* like Christ, as we learn from 2 Cor. iii. 18, "But we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed into the same image*, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." There is a spiritual transformation, which St. Paul calls in Rom. xii. the being "transformed by the renewing of the mind." But there is something more than the renewal of the mind. In Rom. viii. 29 it is said of God's people that they are predestinated "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren"; that they might all have a family likeness, not only in spirit, but *also in body*; and we learn from 1 John iii. 2 that this transformation will be only completed when the Lord comes, and we see Him as He is. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but when He shall appear *we shall be like Him*, for we shall see Him as He is."

Then if we want to know what we are to be like—I am speaking specially of the believer, and of none other—we must look to what Christ is; but I want you, dear friends, who are not believers, just to look at the Bible picture of what the believer's body is to be, that you by God's grace may be attracted and won to that Saviour who will do this for all who know and put their trust in Him.

Now, what was the body of Jesus Christ like after this resurrection? It was to all intents and purposes the *same* body. They knew Him again. Mary, though at first she did not quite perceive Him, yet when the Master said "Mary," she knew His voice. It was the same voice. The disciples knew Him when they saw Him; He was the same. So will our bodies

be. We shall know each other. I think that is clear from Scripture. We see in Luke xvi. that Abraham knew Lazarus, and the rich man in torment knew Abraham and Lazarus too. Whatever they were like, they were like enough to be known, to be recognised. This is a very blessed hope. We have lost friends, but we shall know them again. When the disciples were standing with Jesus on the holy mount they saw Moses and Elias, and they knew them. They had never seen them on earth, but yet they knew them. So shall we know many whom we have never seen. We shall know the whole family of God. We shall know each other in glory. It was the "same Jesus" that they saw go into heaven who shall come again, and He will bring His saints with Him.

Now, another point is that it was a *real* body. It was not a sham body; it was not the mere shadow of a body, as it were—a ghost; it was not a thin vapour. The body of the Lord was a substantial body. If you look at Matt. xxviii. 9 you will see that the disciples met Jesus, and what did they do? They held Him by the feet. There was clearly a body that the disciples could hold by the feet. Then again, in John xx., you find that He appears to the disciples, and that He shows them the holes in His hands and His feet; and, in the 27th verse, he tells the disbelieving Thomas to draw near and to thrust his hand into His side. There was a substantial body which Thomas could touch, and into the side of which he could have put his hand. Again, in Luke xxiv., you will find that the body of the Lord Jesus Christ was one with which He could eat and drink. In the 41st verse you read, "While they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat?" It may be said, what could a glorified body want with

meat? Nevertheless, they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and He took it and did eat before them. You find Him doing the very things He did when He was in the natural body upon earth. He goes into their houses; He sits down; He breaks bread; He meets them again on the seashore. To all intents and purposes His body is still a body, though it is the spiritual body. There is the difference—the one is called a “natural” body, the other is called a “spiritual” body. There is nothing unheavenly in having a body. It is what the Lord has. And we too are not to become ghosts, mere shadowy phantoms. We are to have a body “like unto the body of His glory.” He is in His body glorified to-day at the right hand of God, and His people will be there in their bodies.

But, then, though it was the same in these respects, in another respect it was not the same. He could pass through walls with it. In John xx. you read that the disciples were assembled together in a room, having the doors shut, and suddenly Jesus appeared in their midst. Though it was an actual body, yet it could do this. And our bodies will be the same. Where we shall be I know not; but I know from Rev. v. 10 that we shall reign on the earth, or “over” the earth, as it may be rendered. You find Him living at that time for forty days in the most mysterious manner. Sometimes He is in one place, sometimes in another; now He appears to them, and then He vanishes out of their sight. But it is the same body, and He can do wonderful things with it; and at last this body of the Lord Jesus mounts up to glory, He is received into a cloud out of their sight, and they see Him no more till He comes again.

So I believe our bodies will be just like Christ's. We

may be able to understand very little about it, but that does not prove that it is not true. If He has said it, then we may rest on it.

Well, then, another point is, it is a body that *never dies*. Jesus Christ, we read in Rom. v., "being raised from the dead, dieth no more"; and we shall be like Him. "We have been planted with Him in the likeness of His death," and "we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection." In Luke xx. you find that, speaking to the Pharisees about the children of the resurrection, He says, "Neither can they die any more." They are like unto Him, they can die no more. And so again and again you find the eternal life spoken of. The believer, changed into the image of his Lord, has the life of Christ now, and has the life of Christ for ever. He never can die again. There is no end to His glory, and there is no end to him who is to enjoy the glory.

"Endless life in endless day,
Sin and sorrow pass'd away."

Then there is one more point. It is a *glorious* body. It is like "the body of His glory." Oh, how wonderful that must be! When the apostles stood upon the holy mount and saw "the power and coming," as St. Peter says, "of our Lord Jesus Christ," they saw two with Him, Moses and Elias. It is written of Jesus in Matt. xvii. 2 that "His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light," so glorious was it. You cannot look upon the sun, it is so glorious. Such was Jesus, and such evidently were these two men, for they appeared also "*in glory*." Now, these are the very words which the Holy Ghost has written down for our comfort; for in Col. iii. 4 you read, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear,

then shall we also appear with Him *in glory*." Just as Moses and Elias were there encircled by the wondrous glory of their Lord and Master, with Him in it, so when He appears again and changes our vile body, this body of humiliation, it will not be a body of humiliation, but it will be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. "It is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory." Oh, who can conceive what that will be? Do not let us, dear friends, think lightly of all these wondrous privileges. God has written down these things, and they are meant to be practical, and I, for one, think that they are deeply practical. I think the more that you and I, as believers—and it is to those that I am now speaking—see what Jesus Christ has done, and will do for us, the more shall we learn to walk worthily of the kingdom and glory to which He has called us. If Jesus Christ has redeemed my body, then it is not my own. If He loved my body, if He still keeps me in this body, it is that I may serve Him in it. St. Paul says, "I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your *bodies* unto Him a living sacrifice." He said in the 1st chapter of this epistle and the 20th verse that it was his "earnest expectation and his hope that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether it be by life or by death." And then in 2 Cor. iv. he describes the believer as "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in *our body*." It is in the body that one can glorify God; and that religion is the most spiritual which uses the body most to serve God with, and that religion is not worth anything that is only a religion in the spirit. There is no such thing as a really religious man or woman who does not use the body to glorify God. It is what

we used to serve the devil with, and it is what God gives us the great privilege of serving Him with. "As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity, so now yield your members servants to righteousness." Christ has not redeemed my spirit, that I may live as I like in the flesh, but I am to glorify Him in this body of mine, which is shortly to be glorified with Him. Am I glorifying Him in it *now*?

I think if we were to understand this more, that our bodies are Christ's, we should not spend so much time about them; if we were living in a cottage, which we were told was to be exchanged at a very short notice for a palace, we should not spend much money on adorning it. And I think that when we look upon this body as that which is shortly to be changed into the image of Christ, we shall see it is not a thing to spend much money upon, or much time in dressing it up. It is a body of humiliation. Let those "whose end is destruction, and whose glory is in their shame," dress up their bodies, and spend the substance which God has given them for His glory in feeding and pampering them, but do not let us do so. It is to be sustained, and God gives us good things for it, not to be abused, but to be used for Him; and if we spend the greater portion of our money in dress, or in eating and drinking, and comforts which only have the body for their object, we are dishonouring God, and not glorifying Him in the body. The "earthly house of this tabernacle" is to be "dissolved," and we are to have "a house which is not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Then do not let us live as if we were to live here always. God has called us to something higher. Oh, that we knew what that means, when the apostle says,

"I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection." How often do we find our body uppermost, and all its desires, and lusts, and passions not denied and subdued; and is it any wonder, then, that the soul grows cold and dead? Not a bit. Let us see what *God* means to do with this body hereafter, and then we shall see what *we* are to do with it here; that it is His, and is to be used for Him and for His glory, for "your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price; *therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*"

This subject is a very blessed one as regards God's people. It is a sweet and blessed and glorious hope. God hath given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises, that we may be thereby made partakers of the Divine nature"; and the more we lay hold of the promises, and feed upon them, digest them, and get them right into our souls, the more shall we be made partakers, through the Holy Ghost, of the Divine nature.

But this is an awfully solemn subject for those who are not Christ's, for there is no such blessed hope before them. I have no doubt I am speaking to some here to-night who as yet are unable to say, "This is true of *me*." Your sins, dear friends, are not yet washed away in the blood of Christ, and this glorious prospect is not glorious to you, because you do not know that you have got a share in it.

The subject of the body of the lost soul is very important. The body of the lost soul has somewhat the nature of the body of the saved soul. At any rate, it has two of the main features which I have mentioned. *It is the same body.* To all intents and purposes of recognition, it is the same. Abraham

knew the rich man's voice. There was no mistake about that man. Those who are lost will know each other. Dear friends, if you are going to the bottomless pit (as we all were by nature, although some of us are saved by grace, and are going to the heavenly city), you will meet there those whom you have known on earth, those whom your influence has helped to bring there, those whose influence has helped to bring you there. They will know your faces, and you will know theirs. Mothers, who are bringing up their children without God, will know their children there. Brothers, who have led their sisters into folly, will know those sisters there. Husbands, who have hindered their wives, and wives, who have hindered their husbands, from following Christ, these wives and these husbands will know each other there. There will be no mistake. And what will be more awful than anything else will be the marks of sin that those bodies will bear. "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins," said the Lord Jesus; and the man that dies in his sins remains in his sins, and rises in his sins, and all the marks of sin will then come out in their horrible deformity. The great disease of sin shall be firmly imprinted for ever on those countenances, on those faces, on those members that have served sin. Oh, what an awful recognition shall there be in hell! It is the same body, and they shall be judged in that same body. The graves that hide them all shall give up their dead and they shall be judged "according to their works."

And, then, again, *it is a body that cannot die*. As the believer's body never dies, so this body, though always dying, shall never die. The existence of this body is never called life, so far as we can gather from

the Scriptures, but it is called "*the second death*," "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." You will remember how the rich man cried for a drop of water to cool his tongue, because he was tormented in the flame. There the fire burns that will never kill; the worm feeds that will never destroy. The body dies not.

It is not the body of glory. You read in Daniel xii. that some shall be raised to "everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." It shall be "abhorred," we read, "of all flesh" (Isa. lxvi. 24). It shall be something so awful, the body of this humiliation changed marvellously and horribly into a body of shame and of everlasting contempt. Hope shall never come there. There shall be no end to it. Millions, and millions, and millions of years shall pass away, and it shall still be the same. There shall be no end. "These shall go away into *everlasting* punishment." Oh, may God awaken any who have hitherto gone on securely in the broad way, *whose end is destruction*! I do not care whether you call me uncharitable or not for preaching about such things. Think about them. It is not because it is pleasant to speak about them, but because any one standing up to speak to his fellow-sinners, if he does not warn them of the wrath to come, will be guilty in God's sight. I do not want to be more charitable than God is, or than Christ was, and He told souls here about this "wrath to come," and about this eternal damnation which lies beyond.

But now, dear friends, while I tell you this as a friend, I can also tell you this very night that there is a Saviour who died on the cross for sinners, and that His hand is stretched out to save you from that

place to which, by nature and by practice, those who are unsaved here are going as fast as time can carry them. Jesus Christ had died, that you might live. He left His throne in glory, and died that you might not perish, but might have everlasting life. Oh, turn not away from that outstretched hand! Despise not Him that speaketh! Do not trample underfoot the blood of the covenant in your haste to get to that place, but turn and live! "*Now* is the accepted time; *now*," thank God, "is the day of salvation." Now you can be warned, now you can be told of a present salvation, of One who has died that you might live; who in His love for souls poured out His soul unto death. But if you despise Him, there remains "no more sacrifice for sin." It is only Christ. You must be *in Christ*, or you will be *in hell*. You must have His arms around you, or you will have the devil's. You must be joined to Him who is in glory, and who is coming again to take His people there, or you will be joined for ever to those who are consigned to everlasting destruction.

I beseech you, therefore, who are uncertain, to get *certainty*. Make up your mind about it. Do not halt between two opinions. It is either one thing or the other, and the day is quickly coming when all will be plain, and when you will either sit on the right hand of the Saviour or on the left. Oh, look to that Saviour now! He is "READY TO SAVE." Do you know what that means? He is ready to forgive. Who is ready to be forgiven? He is ready to forgive every one that believeth on Him. Will you put your trust in Jesus? In Christ's stead, I beseech you, be ye reconciled to God. God would not have given His Son to suffer such a death if there were not an

awful ruin awaiting sinners. And now unto you is preached the gospel, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Who will take salvation? Who will accept it? Does any one say, "God helping me, I will?" May God look into your heart, may He read that word there, "Lord, *I believe*, help Thou mine unbelief." Believe in Christ, and then you too shall have this blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of our great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who shall change this body of our humiliation, and fashion it LIKE UNTO THE BODY OF HIS GLORY.

THE SUBDUING POWER OF CHRIST

PHILIPPIANS iii. 20, 21

“ For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ : who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.”

AT our last meeting we looked at the first part of this 21st verse, and considered the wonderful change that will pass, according to God's Word, upon the bodies of Christ's people when He comes again—a blessed, glorious, and sudden change. Our “vile body,” or, as I told you then, the word meant, this body of our humiliation, will be “fashioned like unto the body of His glory.” It will be done “in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,” when the Lord descends “from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God.” Tarry here, just let us think for a moment what a solemn time that will be. Those will be changed in their bodies who have been previously changed in their souls, and none else. We are told in 2 Cor. iii. 18 that “we all, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are *changed* into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” There is the change of *soul*. Now when the Lord Jesus comes we shall be changed into His image as regards our *bodies*. All *will not* be changed into His image, as I tried to point out the last time ; and I want you to think what

a moment it will be when Christ descends from heaven—when the trumpet sounds—when persons who have been living together, eating and drinking together, worshipping together, sitting in the same pews or on the same benches, perhaps at this meeting, will be separated. There will be a great division made then; those who are Christ's will be changed into His image. Then shall be brought to pass, I believe, that saying of the Lord's, in Matthew, "There shall be two in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other left."

And I would therefore remind you, before I go on to dwell upon the latter part of this verse, what an awful thing it will be for any soul that has heard the gospel, that has heard the name of Jesus, that has read the Bible, that knows about all this, and what will happen, suddenly to see his neighbour, his wife, his child, the person who is sitting next him perhaps at the moment, suddenly changed into the glory of Christ, and to look down upon his own body and to see no change. Oh, like a flash of lightning then the conviction will come upon that person's soul, "Oh, I am unchanged, I am undone for ever!" No change after that; that is the final one. I want you to think about that—to bring this to bear upon the present moment—to think how it would be if the Lord were to come now. Has your heart been changed? If not, the body will not be changed into His likeness then. However far you may have got in the knowledge of the Bible, if you do not know Christ you will be unchanged, or there will pass a more awful change upon you. But, thank God, He who changes

bodies *then* is the One who changes hearts *now*. "Create in me a clean heart, O God," says David. Let that be your prayer *now*. The day when the change in the body will take place is not yet come, but the day when Christ changes hearts *has* come, and it is that that is set before us in the preaching of the gospel. He is able to change you. If there are any in this room who are secretly conscious in their own souls, though they will not allow it to any one else perhaps—"Ah, I know I am not yet among those who shall be changed in this glorious way"; I say to such, ask Him to change your heart. He can do it, as I hope to show you from this passage this evening—He is the One who is able to subdue *all* things unto Himself—He can change *your* heart—He is a living, loving, present Saviour—He has changed numbers of hearts here. We all say, "He has changed my heart," if we have found peace with God through Jesus Christ. This is not my testimony only, but that of every one who has come to Jesus. He has done great things for us; He has given us new hearts, and He will give us the new body. And so, dear friends, we ask, "we *beseech* you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled" to God now. Do not wait till that moment when the trumpet shall sound, and there is no more opportunity, no more sacrifice for sin, no other means of getting changed into the likeness of Christ.

The end of this verse tells us of the power whereby Christ will be able to change the bodies of His people into His own likeness. It assures the believer that Christ is able to do this. "He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself"—all things, of which this is only a part. He has been speaking of the changing of the body—the subduing of the body into His image.

Very well, that is only part of what He is going to do. This One for whom we look, the Lord Jesus Christ the Saviour, He is the One to whom all power is given, and who is able to subdue all things.

Now let us look this evening, for clearness' sake, first of all at this statement in a general way: the great truth laid down here that Christ is the One who is able to, and therefore will—for that is implied in it—subdue all things unto Himself. And then let us look at it as it applies to any unsaved soul, and as it applies to the hearts of His own people.

He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself. Well, first of all that implies that all things have to be subdued. All things are not subdued now. We need not look far to see that; but in order rapidly to trace the present state of things, and see what it will be, let us think of how God has really ordained things to be, according to His will. We read that "God is not the author of confusion but of peace"; and He has accordingly ordained in all His works a marvellous system of subjection one to the other. If you follow me through two or three passages, you will see that wherever God has made known His word, it has been His object to have things arranged in a most beautiful order.

It is even so *in heaven*. We read that among the angels there are "thrones, principalities, and powers." There are different ranks of angels, and among them we read of an archangel—a chief angel.

It is so in God's creation of *inanimate things*. If you look at Gen. i., when God formed the world and all the things that we see, He set some things to rule over other things. In Gen. i. 16 we read, "God made two great lights, the greater light to *rule* the day, and the lesser light to *rule* the night." I only refer to this

to show how the same principle runs through the whole of God's creation.

And thus you find that *men* in their various stations upon earth are made subject to their fellow-men. It begins even at the creation. In Gen. i. 28 we see that God tells man that he is to *subdue* the earth. He is to have dominion. "God blessed them, and God said, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and *subdue* it," etc. And so in the relationship of husband and wife (chap. iii. 16): "Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and *he shall rule over thee.*" Go on again to the subjection of the younger brother to the elder brother (chap. iv. 7), "Unto thee [Cain] shall be his [Abel's] desire, and *thou shalt rule over him.*" So that among the angels, among created things, men over the lower order of earthly things, husband over the wife, elder brother over the younger—all things in a beautiful harmony are subject one to another. And the same idea runs all through the Bible. Just refer with me to the First Epistle of St. Peter, where it is brought out in the most remarkable way. Take, for instance, wives, in chap. iii. 1: "Likewise, ye wives, be in *subjection* to your own husbands." Take servants: "Servants, be *subject* to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also the froward" (ii. 18). Turn to Col. iii. 20, there is the same thing: "Children, be *obedient* to your parents in all things." And in chap. iv. 1 masters are there reminded that they have "a Master" too. Therefore you see that wives to husbands, children to parents, servants to masters, masters to their Master in heaven—all things in perfect order. The same remark applies to flocks or congregations under the charge of God's pastors. Look at Heb. xiii. 17: "Obey them that have the *rule* over you," or as it

is in the margin, "that guide you"; "and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account." Then all men are told to be subject unto the powers, the kings, the rulers, the magistrates that God has ordained in this world; both in the First Epistle of Peter, chap. ii., and more especially in Rom. xiii., where it is said, in the first verse, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God."

Now the opposite of this is *insubordination*—*sin*. It is denying God's authority, and setting up man's authority. When sin came in, there was *disobedience* to God's authority. Therefore you find, in Rom. v., that the first act of sin is called "the disobedience of one." Now only trace that through the Bible. There is the first act—disobedience. It goes on and on and on. The flood—the tower of Babel—all bear witness to the insubordination of man against God—the setting of himself as his own master, until you find, in Ps. xii. 4, that the language of the soul that acknowledges not God as his Lord is just this, "With our tongues will we prevail; our lips are our own: *who is Lord over us?*" This is the expression of the mind that only has self for its ruler, and not God.

Well, you find at last that when St. Paul is describing the awful condition of man in general, in Rom. i., the great feature that runs through all is insubordination to God; not only disobedience to parents, but altogether a contempt for, and denial of God's authority, and a walking after his own lusts. But it does not stop there. It does not only say "there is *no fear of God* before their eyes," but we are told both here and in other passages what a solemn ending all these things would have. In 2 Tim. iii., speaking

of the evils of "the last days," we read—"Men shall be lovers of their own selves, boasters, proud, disobedient to parents." Now mark that. This is one of the signs of the last days—insubordination—want of reverence for God's constituted authorities. And St. Peter and St. Jude tell us in the most marked and solemn terms what those evils will end in. In 2 Pet. ii. 10 it is said, "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and *despise government: presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.*" And lest we should forget it, the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of Jude, has written it again. In the 8th verse of his epistle we are told, "Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, *despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.*" And we are told in the 11th verse that they perish in the gainsaying of Korah, who despised—was insubordinate to—the constituted authority of Moses and Aaron, and perished lamentably.

All this shows us how these things will end; and that is what we see a great deal of in the present day—such a want of reverence for God's authority as set up in the persons of men in their proper relations of life. This comes to pass according to the Word of God. It will bring judgment. But, dear friends, these things are not to continue. "The foundations of the world are out of course." All is in confusion, and the righteous saith, "Lord, how long?" How long is this to go on? How long shall the ungodly say, "Where is now their God?" The believer often feels as if God had withdrawn Himself from all government of the world, when he sees the injustice and the fearful course of sin all over the world. It makes him say, Oh, how long is this to go on? The verse I am reading to-night tells us it is to come

to an end. "*He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.*" God is not the author of confusion, but of order.

Now there was always ONE prophesied of who would set things to right from the very beginning. He is spoken of in 1 Samuel ii., in the inspired prayer of Hannah. She says, "The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken in pieces. Out of heaven shall he thunder against them. The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth, and He shall give strength unto HIS KING, and exalt the horn of HIS ANOINTED." And then just look with me at the 89th Psalm. All through that psalm you see One spoken of, who is coming to "rule" or "judge." (The word judge is often used in the Old Testament, not in the sense of merely executing an act of justice, but of ruling as the judges ruled or "judged" Israel.) All through the Psalms you have this One spoken of as the One who "cometh to judge the earth." In the 80th Psalm, verse 17, we are told that He is a man. Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of Man whom Thou madest strong for Thyself." Why strong? Because He had got a great work to do. He had *to subdue all things unto Himself.*

Now, if you look at Matt. xxviii. 18 (and there are a number of similar passages I have not time to refer to), you find our Saviour saying, "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth." It appears from Heb. ii. that He is the one of whom the 8th Psalm speaks, who is to have dominion over all the works of God's hands—a dominion which Adam forfeited, but which Christ, "the second Adam," comes to take again (ver. 5)—"For unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

But one in a certain place " (in the 8th Psalm) " testified, saying, What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ? or the son of man, that Thou visitest him ? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels ; Thou crownedst him with glory and honour and didst set him over the works of Thy hands : Thou hast put *all things in subjection under his feet*. For in that He put all in subjection under him, He left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him : but we see JESUS, who was made a little lower than the angels " (so that evidently this has its full application in Jesus) " for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour."

And the same language is used in 1 Cor. xv. 25—" For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death ; for He hath put *all things under His feet*." This is the fulfilment of it. The Lord, the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, is *able* to do it ; and, dear friends, thank God we have the sure and blessed hope that He *will* do it. We cannot tell the moment when, but we have the promise of God. There is His promise, and He will assuredly fulfil it. He will come in power. He will descend from heaven with a shout. The first act of Christ's subduing all things will be that of which we read last week, when He changes the bodies of His dead or living saints, and makes them *like unto Himself*. And what happens then ? You read in Rev. xix. that " the armies which were in heaven followed Him, clothed in fine linen, white and clean." The saints there are associated with Jesus in His acts of ruling and judging. In Rev. xx. we are told that thrones were set, " and they sat on them, and judgment was given unto them " ; which is the fulfilment, I suppose, of the

prophecy in Dan. vii., to which I referred some two or three months ago, as showing that the saints have the very power that Jesus has Himself, because it is said they are with Him on the throne. "Dominion was given to the saints of the Most High." And in this also, I suppose, is fulfilled the statement of St. Paul, in 1 Cor. vi., where we are told that "the saints shall judge the world." All this shall take place when Jesus comes. They will reign with Him. We are told in two or three places in the Psalms, especially in Ps. cxlix. 7-9, that His saints will have this glorious power. "This honour have all His saints"; and in Rev. ii. 26 it is written, "To him that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations."

And now, just retrace for a moment, before we go on, the train of thought to which I have been trying to guide your minds. God has instituted a beautiful order in creation, in His Church, in the world. Sin, by His permission—why, we know not—has broken that order for a time. But God's purposes are not changed. The Man whom He has made strong for Himself, and to whom He has given all power, is coming to put things to rights. We are told in the 3rd chapter of Acts, "The heavens shall receive Him until the times of *the restitution* of all things." But when that moment comes, of which no man knoweth, Jesus will come with His power and begin to put all things to rights, even as they ought to be. That will be the time of "the restitution of all things." Then in His glory He will reign with His saints on the earth; and then at "the end" the Son also—showing that there is a beautiful subjection and subordination even in the highest things—shall be subject to the Father (1 Cor. xv. 28).

Not for an instant do I believe that the Lord Jesus Christ ever loses His eternal dominion, for we are told that "of His government shall there be *no end*." But I think that the passage (a confessedly difficult one) teaches us that whilst, during the millennial period, it is the *manhood* by whom the government is administered; yet that at the end of that time, all enemies being subdued, and the kingdom being formally delivered to the Father in its complete and perfect condition, it is by the *Godhead* that the supreme authority will be wielded, and thus God (*viz.*, the Father) "be all in all."

Well, then, this is the time that we look for, the "restitution of all things." He is able to subdue even all things unto Himself, and He will do it. Just let us think of what it is to be associated with the Lord Jesus in such a glory. And let us remember, dear friends, that "before honour is humility." Christ stooped low enough from His throne before He took His glory. Let us be willing to do the same. Let us be willing to take the low place now, that we may be made fit as He was; made "perfect through suffering," to take a high and glorious place then.

Now this is only giving a line of thought about this word, "Able to subdue all things unto Himself." It might be followed out at much greater length, and many here, who search the Scriptures, will be able to do it. But now let us look at this in its application to those who are unsaved, and to those who are saved.

First of all let us apply it to those here, or anywhere, who are not yet under the power of the grace of God. The condition of the unregenerate heart is, that it is "*not subject* to the law of God." There is no subjection. They sing, "Crown Him Lord of all," but they do not mean it. We are told in Romans viii.: "The carnal mind is enmity against God; it is *not*

subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be.*" And in Rom. x., when Paul says "that his heart's desire for his brethren is, that they might be saved," he adds that the reason why they were not saved was, that they did not "*submit* themselves unto the righteousness of God." There was a want of subjection. There was no owning of Christ as Lord, no acknowledging Him, no acknowledging their own lost, weak, guilty, helpless state, and confessing Jesus as Saviour and Lord. Now perhaps there are some here who have tried to make themselves subject to Christ, and you found your wills going just the other way. The more you have tried, perhaps, to bring yourself under the dominion of the Saviour, the more your own nature has rebelled against the commandments of God, and you have been unable to do it. And *you* never will be able. But this verse contains the gospel just as much as any verse of the Bible. Good news! It tells you of One that *is* able even to subdue "*all things*" unto Himself, and is therefore able to subdue *you*. He has subdued our hearts who believe in Him, or we should not be believers now. He is able to subdue every heart, for "*all* power is given" unto Him. There is no case too hard for Him.

Just take two instances out of the Scriptures of this power of Jesus in subduing persons unto Himself. Take that case of physical and moral insubordination—the maniac in the 5th chapter of Mark. There is a man whose mind and body are subject to no authority at all. His friends have tried to tame him; but no, he is a raging madman. They can do nothing with him. They have bound him in fetters and chains, and he has broken them in sunder. No man "can tame him." He is just like what you and I were before conversion; just like any soul in this room to-night,

who finds his own lusts and devices too strong for any resolution he can make. Well, this man met with Jesus, and what do you find? Why, a few verses after—giving perhaps a space of a few minutes—you find him “sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind.” Oh, that One is able to subdue all things. He is the Mighty One. It is the power of the Lord that has subdued that man’s mind—that furious mind—and has quieted these frantic limbs, and taught him to sit down at His feet like a little child. And Jesus can do that for *you*.

Take another instance of a much worse madness than that : a man diseased in his conscience—a religious man, doing everything, as he thought, for the glory of God, and yet doing everything against the glory of God—Paul. Now there is a man, entrenched in the stronghold of his own prejudices and religious feelings—prejudices in which he had been brought up from a child. Nothing can tame him. He is haling men and women, and casting them into prison. But one day, as you know, riding to Damascus, there shines suddenly a light from heaven, and that light strikes him down to the earth. He is *subdued*. That proud, self-righteous man is subdued, and his first cry is, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” He was brought into subjection. There was the power of Christ again. And so it is with souls now. It is the light from Heaven that streams in upon a soul and brings it into subjection—“into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”

It was from Jesus, the crucified and risen Saviour, that the light shone upon Paul ; from Him who says, “I am the light of the world.” Oh, are any of your hearts not subject to Christ? Has He not subdued you unto Himself? Well, now, just come for one

moment, and look at the wonderful sight—the crucified Saviour, and may that subdue you. Look at Jesus. Try and picture to yourselves the Lord of life and glory coming to His own, cast out, nailed to the cross, the holy and spotless One, crucified as a malefactor—and what for? Not for His own sins, but for ours; dying, the just for the unjust, the holy for the ungodly, the righteous One in the place of guilty sinners. And at whose hands? His own creatures'. "He came unto *His own*, and His own received him not." "The world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not," but cast Him out. You and I have all our share of that, morally, if we had not physically. We cast out Jesus, and then in His wondrous love for our souls Jesus laid down His life and gave up the ghost, and "poured out His soul unto death," and "made intercession for transgressors" like you and me. Oh, dear friends, if you look upon that cross of Jesus, you will see what your sins are like. Nothing but the blood of Jesus could cleanse you. If you want to know what the love of God is like, you see it in the cross of Jesus. If you want to fathom that mystery, you can only do so there. Far above any other love was the love of Christ to your sinful, ruined, hell-deserving soul, when He laid down His life an atonement for sin. And not only that. That love of Jesus did not end in death. "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it." "Love is strong as death," and so when He rose again, He came and said, "Preach the gospel, *beginning at Jerusalem.*" Go and tell those very sinners who have killed Me that I have loved them—that there is pardon for them through the very blood that their hands have been the means of shedding. Oh, is there any love like this? Dear friends, does not that touch

your hearts? Oh, may God help you if you have as yet had, as we all of us have had, a heart untouched by the love of God; may He work upon you now. May He show you what this cross means, the wondrous love of God manifested in giving Jesus to be the propitiation for our sins; and lead you to think of that crucified, that risen Saviour, who has come, as it were, with the very hand which bears the mark of the nails through it, and has knocked at the door of your heart again and again, saying, Let Me in. *There* is the love of God.

Does not that subdue you? or do you still feel you have an unsubdued heart? What are you to do with it? Well, the only thing to do with it is to go to the Lord Jesus Christ with it, and get Him to change it for you. Ask Him. Pray to Him—yes, pray to Him. I am sorry to find in these days that there are many who would counsel unconverted souls not to pray. I speak about this because it is only two days ago that some friends or neighbours (I don't know their names) very kindly sent me some tracts, which they often do, with, I have no doubt, the kindest intention; but in one of these tracts is distinctly laid down the doctrine that an unconverted soul is not to pray to God—that he cannot pray acceptably, and that therefore he ought never to be told to pray. Now, dear friends, I mention this in order to guard you against it. It is written, I have no doubt, with an excellent intention, but I thoroughly believe it is not God's truth. The publican prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and got pardon. God's command to the "wicked" and the "unrighteous" is, "Call upon the Lord while He is near" (Isa. lv. 6, 7).

And I say to you in all affection and sincerity, if you feel you have a hard heart, go and pray to have

it changed. You can do nothing better ; and if you say, as I know those would say who argue against this doctrine, a man cannot pray without faith ; I tell you, dear friends, in prayer there is faith. Prayer is as distinct an act of faith as anything a man can do, for " he that cometh to God *must believe* that He is, and that He is the Rewarder of those that diligently seek Him." And if you go into your room to-night, and cast yourselves on your knees before God, and say, O God, change my heart, " create in me a clean heart " ; I say there *is* faith in that prayer. Go to God with your heart *as it is*. Say, " Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief " ; but do not keep yourself from prayer. Do not let any one in these days, when errors are rife on every hand (I daresay we all hold many), do not let us for a moment tell a poor dying lost soul that he is not to ask for life. It is too awful. You *may* come to God. You *may* plead the name of Jesus. You *are* to come to Him. You *are* to go and say, O God, save my poor lost soul, for I cannot change my heart, I cannot subdue it, but I read of *One who is able* to subdue *even all things* to Himself ; take my heart and do it, for I cannot. I can give you no better counsel than that, and if that is not believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, acknowledging His name as a name by which prayer can be heard, I do not know what is. And so, dear friends, let me ask you to do it. If any of you are conscious that this moment, this night, you have an unsaved soul, go to God and ask Him to save it, and He says, " Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out."

" Thy Word has commanded my prayer,
 Thy Spirit has taught me to pray ;
 And all my unholy despair
 Is ready to vanish away.

Thou wilt not be weary of me,
Thy promise my faith shall sustain;
And soon, very soon, I shall see,
That I have not been asking in vain."

Jesus can change the hardest heart that ever existed in this world, and yours is not too hard to be changed by Him.

Now, lastly, for a few moments, these words apply most blessedly to the case of believers in Jesus. "He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Perhaps the great plague of the believer's soul is this hard heart, this insubordination of his will to the will of Christ. He says :

" I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go."

And yet, when God tries to guide him, he will not go, and he is constrained continually to say with Paul : " I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind " ; and the law in my members is *not subject* to the law of God. We want to say from our hearts—Thy will be done, and yet each day shows us more and more what an unhumbled heart we have, how little our wills are in conformity with, and subjection to, the will of " our Father which is in heaven."

Well, this verse tells us of a blessing. " He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Oh, dear friends, lay hold of a word like that, and do not let it go. Have you got some strong passions, some strong will, some strong desire that you have been trying to overcome, which has humbled you and led you to think at last—Oh, it is no good, I cannot go on. Why, you have been trying in the strength of your own resolutions ; your fault and my fault has been that we have not had to do with Jesus. *He* is able. He does not say that *you* are able. Paul truly says, in

Phil. iv., "I can do all things,"—but how? "Through Christ," or "*in Christ*" as it really is, "who strengtheneth me." It is by laying hold of Him in whom is strength for you and me who are helpless. It was when the Israelites sought God's help, as you read again and again, that the Philistines were subdued before them. Whenever they fought in their own strength, they did not get the victory. And here is the promise for you and for me—"He *will* subdue our iniquities" (Mic. vii. 19). This is a glorious promise. Jesus is one who can subdue the strongest passions and lusts—the most evil habits of mind, heart, and flesh that remain in you. He may impose a discipline that we do not like, but we must remember that the Master Himself went through a wonderful discipline. We read in Heb. v., "He was made perfect through suffering." "The servant is not above his lord, neither the disciple above his master." He was on His road to glory, and so are you and I who have been washed in His blood. We must be content to take the same path, to go through suffering, remembering what it is for, that we may be made "partakers of His holiness." If He answers your prayer, to be made like unto Him, in a way that you do not fancy, remember that though the affliction "*seemeth not to be joyous but grievous, it afterwards yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness.*" And remember this too—I pray that we may remember it—there is strength laid up for each time of need. There is a wonderful expression in Col. i., where we are told that we are "*strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering*": that there is the glorious power of Jesus strengthening us to go through whatever suffering may be before us with joyfulness, that we may be made partakers of

His holiness. And this will soon end; the time of suffering will be past, and the time of glory will begin. Soon we shall not have to pray daily, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," for His kingdom will have come and His will will be done. "The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, will be ended" then, for "the whole earth will be filled with His glory." "A king shall reign in righteousness," Isaiah says, "and princes shall rule in judgment," and then shall be brought to pass the sayings that are written. "The times of restitution" shall have come, and Jesus shall have subdued "all things unto Himself."

But now, as we have seen in this passage, that time has not come. We are citizens of the heavenly city, but we are not yet at home. We are on the road thither, and we look for the time when we shall cast our crowns before His feet, and praise "Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." *All things* will then be subdued. And that is what we long for. That is the desire that is at the bottom of every renewed heart. May God, for His name's sake, grant that some soul may be brought this night into subjection to Jesus, and own Him as Saviour and Lord of all! Amen.

THE END

